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FEBRUARY, 1956

# THE Liguorian

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LOVERS OF GOOD READING

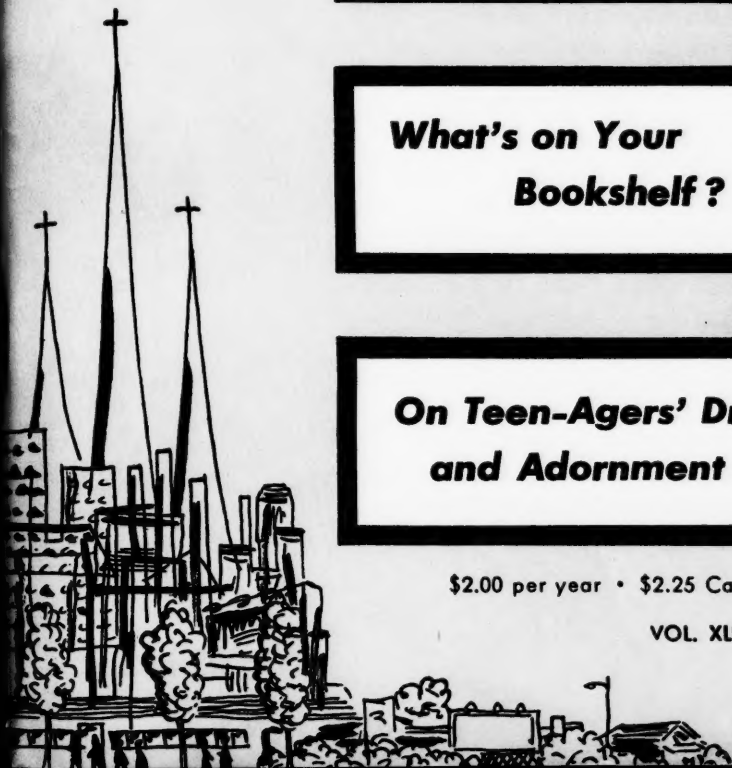
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Catholic Doctrine p. 65***

***What's on Your  
Bookshelf? p. 77***

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# THE *Liguorian*

February, 1956

a magazine for the lovers of good reading



*Devoted to the Unchangeable Principles of Truth, Justice, Democracy and Religion, and to All That Brings Happiness to Human Beings*

## On Disagreements About Catholic Doctrine

Have you ever said: Why don't all Catholic authorities agree on everything they tell people to do? Maybe you need to ponder these distinctions.

*Donald F. Miller*

**T**HIS is an answer to those Catholics who have experienced some disturbance over the fact that there are matters of Catholic doctrine — particularly moral doctrine — on which they have heard or read differing and sometimes contradictory opinions given by persons in some positions of authority, i.e., as approved writers or preachers or pastors or directors, in the Catholic Church. It is an answer to this question that has frequently been put to us: Why don't all Catholic bishops, pastors, writers, priests and confessors agree in everything that they teach or command the faithful?

It is quite understandable that any lack of agreement on the part of Catholic authorities should be disturbing to some minds. One thing that is strongly stressed in all presentations of the truths of the Catholic Church is her unity — her oneness and sameness of teaching for all Catholics and from the time of Christ down to today. How is it possible, then, some

Catholics say, that sometimes one priest will tell you one thing and another something different in answer to exactly the same question? Or why is it that in some dioceses bishops permit mixed marriages to take place in church, while in other dioceses they must be held in the rectory? Where is this unity, of which most Catholics are so justly proud?

The answer to this problem can be found only in the making of proper distinctions between the essential areas of unity in the Catholic Church, and those points on which lack of perfect agreement among all Catholic authorities in no way reflects on that unity. In particular, every Catholic should be aware of three things: 1) That there are matters of Catholic doctrine and moral principle on which there can be no disagreement among Catholics; 2) that individual Catholics sometimes mistakenly think they have found a disagreement on some essential

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point among Catholic authorities; 3) that there is a vast field in which disagreements are at times to be expected, and in which they do not mar the unity and universality of Catholic doctrine.

### **1. Where There Can Be No Disagreement**

It has always been accepted that Christ gave infallibility to His Church in matters of faith and morals when, among other clear statements, He said to her: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Thus, when the Church, either through the Pope infallibly teaching, or a general council, or through her unchanging tradition throughout the centuries, declares that a certain doctrine must be believed or that a certain moral principle must be observed by all who wish to be saved, then there can be no disagreement on these matters among Catholics either in high or low positions. One who doubts or denies such truths makes himself a heretic, i.e., one who has not only denied his faith, but who must not be listened to by loyal Catholics.

Thus any so-called Catholic who would deny the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary, or the fact of her assumption into heaven, or the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, or the infinite value of the Mass, or the efficacy of prayer, would be denying an essential truth of his faith. Any disagreement between Catholics on such points as these would not really be between Catholics: it would be between Catholics and heretics.

So, too, in regard to the moral law. It is the authoritative and universal teaching of the Catholic Church that birth-prevention is a grave sin against

the natural law; that "therapeutic abortion," or any direct abortion, is a great crime; that divorce and remarriage after a valid, consummated, Christian marriage is the same as adultery. Among true Catholics there can be no disagreement on matters of this nature; the one who denies such principles denies, in some respect, his Catholic faith.

Besides these important matters of revealed doctrine and the natural moral law, there can be no disagreement among loyal Catholics in regard to the positive laws that the Church has made to govern all the faithful. Every true Catholic believes that Christ gave the power to bind and loose to His Church when He said, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Therefore, when the Church commands all Catholics to hear Mass on Sundays and holy days, when she binds them to a certain amount of abstaining and fasting, when she lays down definite rules to be followed in regard to entering the state of marriage and sending children to Catholic schools, there can be no disagreement among true Catholics as to the general binding force of these laws. Such positive laws do admit of dispensations and excusing causes; judging what is an excusing cause as a reason for a dispensation may give rise to disagreements at times, as will be seen below. But no Catholic can remain a good Catholic if he just takes the position: "I don't accept any such law."

### **2. Where Disagreement is Due to Mistakes Made Through Mis-quotation or Mis-interpretation or Mis-statement.**

Many of the so-called disagreements reported by Catholics concerning Cath-



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olic teaching are actually the result of some persons' mis-hearing or mis-reading or mis-interpreting some statement of essential Catholic doctrine that has come to their attention. In their minds they have an erroneous definition of the terms used; or they heard only part of an explanation that was given, which could not be rightly understood without the rest; or they were so intent on hearing what they wanted to hear that they thought that was what was actually said.

A common example of this mis-quotation as a source of disagreement among Catholics is the subject of birth-prevention. It is an essential, universal, Catholic, moral principle that birth-prevention, whether by withdrawal or any medical or mechanical means, is always a serious violation of the natural law; that no circumstances whatsoever can make this lawful for married people. Yet every now and then you will meet a Catholic who will say: "Father So-and-so said that we don't have to have all the children we can bear; therefore he gave his approval to birth-prevention." The truth is that Father So-and-so meant that parents are free to "control" the number of their children by limitation of their use of the marriage privilege; not by sinful misuse of the marriage act.

Another example of the same kind of mis-interpretation often happens in the case of a Catholic who is looking for permission to marry after a divorce. Every informed Catholic knows that if a first marriage was valid, sacramental and consummated, no power in the Church can declare one of the partners free to marry a second time so long as the first partner is still alive. Yet an individual looking for such freedom may go to a priest and hear him discuss some of the things that might

make a seemingly good marriage invalid. From this general discussion he may wrongfully draw the conclusion that surely something is going to be found to make his first marriage invalid. It is even worse when a Catholic states that, if he pays enough money or finds the right priest, surely his first marriage will be declared invalid because he has read about declarations of the nullity of a first marriage being given to prominent people. The fact is that such declarations are given to nobody except on the ground of definite proven facts in the individual case presented.

There is also the possibility that a disagreement can arise among Catholics because a priest has made a mistake in his statement of some important teaching of the Church. The Church takes elaborate precautions to prevent such mistakes from being made, but the very fact of her taking such precautions reveals that it is not impossible that such a mistake might be made.

The bishop in each diocese is the guardian of essential Catholic doctrine; he is the one on whom it devolves to see that spokesmen for the faith in pulpit, on platform, in publications, in no way mislead the faithful as to what they must believe and what laws they must observe. No priest may preach without having completed the arduous course of study required by Church law for all priests; without having undergone appropriate examinations; without having the approval of the bishop for preaching. No priest may hear confessions in any diocese without what is called "the faculty," which means the approval of the bishop as a trustworthy guide for his penitents. No one may write about Catholic doctrine in books or publications without

submitting to the laws of censorship that the Church has laid down to protect the faithful from error.

It still remains possible for a priest or a Catholic writer to make a misstatement of some important Catholic teaching, through forgetfulness, carelessness, or even deliberate heresy on his part. When that happens Catholics will usually see the bishop's authority to protect right Catholic doctrine swing into action to correct the error. The one who made the error will be commanded to recant it publicly; or his permission to preach will be taken away; or he will no longer be permitted to publish his writings on Catholic doctrine. There is little danger that any sincere Catholic will be permitted to remain in error about essential Catholic doctrine as a result of the misstatement of an individual.

### **3. Where Differences Are to be Expected**

All Catholics will therefore find themselves in agreement on three things on the essential revealed and defined truths they must believe as Catholics; on the precepts of the divine and natural law as presented to them by the Church; on the necessity of respect for and obedience to the positive laws that the Church has made binding on all her children. Outside of these three things, all Catholics should recognize the fact that there are practical issues over which differences of opinion can arise, and different rulings can be handed down to different individuals. In the midst of such differences, each Catholic must remember that he has an obligation of obedience to his own immediate spiritual superior, even though somebody else's superior handed down a different decision. This is the area in which obedience brings the most merit: when

the thing commanded rests on the judgment of a human superior.

What are some of these matters on which such differences of judgment can arise? Let it be noted clearly in the examples given that none of them in any way touches the essential things noted above on which there can be no disagreement among Catholics.

1. There can be and are different rulings of different bishops on such practical matters as to how and where mixed marriages are to be performed, as to when a general dispensation from fast and abstinence is to be granted, as to what sins are to be "reserved" to the bishop, so that a confessor must apply to the bishop (never, of course, giving names) for permission to absolve from them.

A bishop in some way shares the teaching and ruling authority of the Holy Father. He is bound to guide his flock according to his judgment of what is good for it, no matter what any other bishop does. No Catholic should ever take scandal from, nor be moved to disobedience by, the fact that his bishop has made a practical ruling that is different from one made by another bishop.

2. It must not be expected that all pastors in guiding their parishioners, and all confessors in directing their penitents, will always make identical rulings for all their subjects on practical matters. First of all, this would be impossible, because each case of an individual soul is different. Secondly, the heart of obedience of a subject to a superior lies in his submitting to a ruling or a decision based on the superior's judgment. Obedience would be easy and without merit if we always knew beforehand, by some universal revelation or inescapable law, what the decision of a superior was going to be.

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In regard to pastors, for example, there can be a wide variety of methods chosen for raising the necessary funds to support the parish. One pastor may ask that envelopes be used for the Sunday collection; another may not. One may ask the people to help with card parties, socials, bazaars, etc.; another may have none of these things. It is lawful for a man, if it is possible, to move into a parish that is run in the way he likes to see a parish run. But in whatever parish a person lives, he should be obedient to the rulings and even the wishes of the pastor. He should not say: In other parishes there is no such ruling as there is in mine; therefore I will not obey this ruling.

In regard to confessors directing souls, judgment plays a large part in decisions that are made on questions like these: "Do I have sufficient reason for practicing rhythm?" "Do I have sufficient cause for being excused from fasting?" "May I, for a certain reason, be permitted to do some manual labor on Sunday?" "What specific practices of mortification will best insure my progress in holiness?"

In none of these cases is there any universal moral principle at issue. These are questions of the application of positive laws to individuals, or of judgment of facts and circumstances that free a person from some certain obligations. When Catholics get together and find that one of them has been given a different answer to one of these questions than another, they should take no scandal from that fact.

The infinite variety of individual circumstances make differences of judgment inevitable; and there is always left over the variable factor of one director's judgment being different from another's.

Penitents are always free to go from one director to another; that is why the most liberal of all the arrangements in the Church is that concerning confession and direction; every Catholic can go to any approved priest whom he chooses. But when he chooses one, he should still practice obedience to the rulings made by him in response to his problems and questions.

3. Lastly, there should be no disturbance among Catholics resulting from the fact that, in intricate problems of social justice, there should be differences of opinion as to the specific application of general principles set down by the Popes. Here, however, a caution is necessary. It is one thing that expert scholars on such knotty problems may disagree. It is another thing for an unschooled, unlearned layman to set himself up in hardened opposition to something that is held by the majority of Catholic experts in the field.

There can indeed, be honest and sincere differences concerning what is best for industrial relations. But there is also a clear trend of Catholic teaching, and every Catholic should want to know what it is, to understand the reasons behind it, and "to think with the best thinkers of the Church."

## **Unlisted**

A professor of journalism in a Western university tells the following story. A reporter wrote an article in which he mentioned Mary Magdalene. The copy-desk man was irritated at the slovenly newspaper work of the reporter for not indicating in some way who Mary Magdalene was, and his irritation was increased when he looked her up in "Who's Who in America" and could not find her listed.



## *For Wives and Husbands Only*

Death in a Bad Marriage

Donald F. Miller

*Problem:* If a Catholic boy were to marry a non-Catholic girl in her church and before the minister, we know that he would be excommunicated from the Catholic Church. The question is this: would he be allowed on his deathbed to come back into the Church, or would he remain excommunicated and thus lose his last chance of getting to heaven? It was my understanding that he could be forgiven on his death-bed, but a friend tells me that this is not so. What is the truth?

*Solution:* Christ established His Church for one purpose and one alone: to help souls reach heaven. There is no such thing as a sin or an excommunication that cannot be absolved, so long as the sinner has true sorrow for his sins and the sincere determination to give them up. That is the principle with which the answer to the above problem must begin.

Excommunication is a grave penalty imposed by the Church upon those who commit certain very grave sins. It deprives a person of the right to receive the sacraments and the privileges and graces that the Church can bestow. But in every case of excommunication, the sinner is told what he must do to have the excommunication lifted, and to get back into good standing in the Church once more.

While an excommunicated person is in good health, he can escape from his excommunication only by giving up the sin that incurred it, and by asking a confessor to have recourse for him to the special authority that can lift the excommunication. Some excommunications are reserved to the authority of special confessors; some to the authority of the bishop; some to the authority of the Pope himself. But in the case of sudden and immediate danger of death, the Church gives to any priest or confessor the power to lift excommunications, even such as are ordinarily reserved to the Pope, so that the sinner, if repentant, will not have to die without hope.

A Catholic who attempts a marriage before a non-Catholic minister incurs an excommunication that is reserved to his bishop. While in good health he can be reinstated in the Church only by giving up his unlawful partner, or arranging to marry her rightly before a priest, *and* by being absolved by a priest who has obtained the faculty of the bishop to absolve him.

In a sudden danger of death, however, any priest could lift his excommunication, but only if he is sincerely sorry for his great sin, and ready, in case he escapes death, to give up his unlawful marriage forever. This last condition is what makes it so hard for such a man to save his soul. After living for ten or twenty or thirty years in an unlawful and invalid marriage, it is exceedingly difficult for him to say sincerely: "If I survive this danger, I will give up my forbidden partner and never again live as if I am married to her, unless I can be and will be truly married to her before a priest." That is why living in a bad marriage is such a terrible risk, and why, even with a priest present, one dying in such a marriage may not be able to make a true act of contrition, without which no sin can ever be forgiven.

# Jungle Missionary

*William F. McKee*

Some of the world's most forsaken people live along the rivers that thread the jungles of Brazil. Here is the log of one missionary's journey to meet and administer to them.

**I**T's no fun being a coward. That's what I am thinking as I walk down to the shore.

Perhaps it isn't all cowardice. What I feel must be one-third that and two-thirds lack of love and zeal.

I'm a priest. Before me lie four or five weeks of priestly work in the Amazon jungle. And I don't want to go.

There are people all around me now. They are loading the boat. But I am alone. Alone, afraid and ashamed. No one knows it but me.

Brother brought the supplies for the trip down with the tractor. He and a group of half-naked, brown-skinned boys are putting them aboard.

I stop thinking long enough to check the list: 200 gallons of Diesel fuel, lube oil, kerosene; beans, rice, canned butter, oatmeal, powdered milk; hardtack, medicines, guns, bullets; Mass kit, Mass wine, hosts, the sick-call set. Yes, it's all there . . . but I'm not.

The boat-boy appears from inside the boat. He says: "Padre, it's all here. We go now?"

I draw a tight breath and say as I have said many times: "Let's go."

Up the plank I go. He follows me after he unties the lines. Then he pulls

up the plank and places it across the prow.

Inside I take off my habit and hang it up. The supplies and gear lie in every part. We'll put them away when we are rolling.

It's a good boat. Forty feet long. Nothing fancy, nothing extra. Home-made. No Cris-Craft. Solid, sturdy, dependable. Divided roughly in three sections — the wheel "room," the cabin, and the engine room.

"St. Alphonsus" is the boat's name. As I check the oil I wonder what good old St. Alphonsus would think if he had to make these trips. He probably would love every minute of them.

I crank the engine. When the big fly-wheel is spinning, I close off the first cylinder and it catches; the second, and it catches. It's a two cylinder Diesel developing 22 horse-power.

The motor and I are good friends. We know each other pretty well by now. We've been through a lot together. It is probably the most blessed engine in the world. When my meager technical skill gives out I don surplice and stole and bless the thing with holy water. A boat without power, especially in a storm in these waters, is a man playing Russian roulette with six loaded chambers.

The boy is by the wheel waiting for me. On these trips he is cook, boat-cleaner, sacristan and general assistant. But he will make no decisions. I must decide when and how and where to go and what we do.

We back off from shore. We were anchored in a creek. From the creek

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we will go into a large lake. Once in the lake if we turn right it's five minutes to the Amazon. If left, we continue on the lake and head for one of three rivers. We're going left on this trip.

In mid-creek we make our turn. We wave goodbye to those on shore. I slowly throttle up to full power. The nose rises and the boat shakes with the heavy vibrations of the engine. As I turn into the lake, I pull the siren button. It tells my superior that I'm on my way. It also tells another friend of mine: "Well, Mary, here I am again. Full of doubts and fears about where I'm going, how I'm going to get there. You know the story. Please take over from here."

I know she will. I feel better.

We're well out in the lake now. The town fast recedes. I turn the wheel over to the boy and go out on the rear deck for a last look at town.

Whenever I do this, I always remember something that happened years ago. I was out for a short spin in the boat with an older priest. It was my first time in the parish motor boat. We were both looking at the town in the distance. I, fresh from the States, said to him: "That town is sure a crummy old hole."

He snorted. Then he turned to me and said: "Maybe it is, Bill. But the day is not too distant when that 'old hole' is going to look to you like New York City."

I didn't believe him. But I learned. As I see it receding now I well know how glad I'll be to see it again.

We round a curve and are in the main body of the lake. I can't see the opposite shore. If all goes well and we don't have weather we should be at the top of the lake about an hour after nightfall. I calculate one day to there, and one day thru the "*chavascal*"

to the river I'm looking for.

Three big rivers feed this lake. Getting to them is not easy. For hundreds of square miles before the mouths of the rivers lies the "*chavascal*." The word means land flooded at high water time, leaving trees, bushes and floating islands of grass sticking out. These camouflage the channel of the river and its mouth.

There are no maps, guideposts or anyone around to give directions. So we'll have to get through on blind instinct and sheer luck. If we hit the channel and manage to follow it without error we'll be through in twelve hours. If not, we'll spend days going up and down blind alleys. I've done that before.

At noon the boy is back in the engine room cooking our dinner — beans, rice, a slab of fish and some hardtack. While I eat, he drives. When I finish, I drive and he eats.

There's no weather, so we make the *chavascal* a little after nightfall. I pick a sheltered spot in it where we won't get much swell even if a storm falls tonight. We tie up to a tree.

By the light of the kerosene lamp we eat our evening meal.

It's eight-thirty now. The worst hours of the trip — those of the first night — tick in on us.

There are no stars nor moon. It's black outside. Black as hell is black. This region is called the "green hell." At night that is a misnomer.

The boat-boy has already stretched out in his hammock in the engine room and has started to snore. I am alone in the cabin, sitting in a canvas deck chair. Thousands of mosquitoes are whining and pounding at the screen. Waves lap gently against the hull. Frogs are croaking everywhere. Crickets rasp. That occasional splash in the water outside means the big red



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*boto* fish or an alligator. My companion is the lamp.

I keep my eyes on the lamp. Its soft light is friendly while all else seems so hostile. There are two varieties of man-killing fish in these waters, the *piranha* and the *piraiba*. The *chavascal* is home for many snakes. Sometimes a snake will come aboard at night via the rope that anchors the boat. Since he can't get in the boat itself, he'll be no problem in the morning light.

I get out a deck of cards and play solitaire. It's still very hot. What I wouldn't give for a cold bottle of beer and a gin-rummy partner.

The solitaire doesn't last long because I'm soon moving cards around to chart a route that we'll probably take tomorrow. So I say my rosary and night prayers and fall into the bunk.

We're up at dawn. I say my Mass on the dining table. Then we fill the tanks from the drums that are on the rear deck. Check and recheck the motor, the rudder, throttle and gear-shift cables. All OK. We're on our way.

"Mother of Perpetual Help, let's do some neat piloting today. St. Alphonsus, keep your eye on that motor for me. We can't stop in this stuff."

The boy brings the morning oatmeal and takes the wheel. I stand beside him eating my breakfast. We move on — left, right, right; we make U-turns, S-turns, every turn in the alphabet. It looks as though we are in the channel. Thank God. There is only one way to tell. We stop and see if the boat will drift back. No drift. That's bad. We're using a compass. That only tells us when we are going back the way we came.

I eat lunch at the wheel. From time to time I climb the roof with the binoculars to see if I can make out the

outlines of the river or perhaps a house. Nothing shows.

I'm taking notes constantly for the return.

About 8 P.M. I turn to the boat-boy and say: "Cut the motor, and tie up."

He raises his eyebrows. I say: "Yes, we're lost."

We park. He asks: "You will eat now?"

"No. But you eat."

"I no eat. I am afraid."

That makes me mad. He was born and reared in this region. Why should he be afraid? But I say nothing to him.

About 9, I go up on the roof again in a swarm of mosquitoes. Perhaps with the glasses I'll be able to see a light.

I see nothing.

It's a leaden heart that I drag down with me.

The evening routine again. But tonight I do my log. I open the big, fat book that is a record of love and glory. Reading it always cheers me. Misery loves company. It contains a detailed account of every one of these trips made by a half dozen priests. Great priests, I think, as I write the log for yesterday and today.

I page through it. It's poetry and fine prose to me. Beautiful words. Cuss words. Times, kilometers, names, places, statistics.

"This is the fifth time this trip that we're lost. Brother, what I wouldn't give for a good guide."

"Every man, woman and child of age went to confession and communion. And this place was supposed to be a den of voodoo. God is good."

"Motor trouble again. We're losing compression. I'm no mechanic but I'm going to take the blasted motor apart tomorrow." Three days later: "Yes-sirree. Broke her down and put in new rings. She purrs like an angel in love."



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Ended up with one nut too many, but I'm not worried."

(It took a lot of guts to do what that priest did. He was many, many days from civilization. If he hadn't gotten the motor fixed and back together, he would still be there.)

Here's an entry that always makes me choke up a bit: "I think I've got malaria. We're 5 days from town and help. I've taken camoquin and aralen. No houses in this area. Boy can't get the boat back alone. I've decided to sweat it out here. Tell Mom I was thinking of her." Then six days later a shaking hand writes: "Was malaria. Very weak. Am trying to get home." Then: "We made it."

I put the book away saying a silent prayer for all the men who preceded me in this work. They were the pioneers. The first paths were cut by them and they let no obstacle stop them.

The next morning after Mass, the boy went out to cast off.

"Wait a minute," I shouted to him. He looked around puzzled.

I scrambled out on the prow. The rope was taut. I looked around. No wind. I was right. The boat was straining against the rope because we were in a current. "We're in the channel, boy, we're in the channel." He dances up and down.

Since we were definitely in the channel we probably would be able to stay in it if we used utmost care. We do just that. Three hours later we see the clearly defined banks of the river and a house. What a beautiful sight!

As we approach, people appear. We tie up and I go up to the house. I explain that I will return on such and such a date. That I will baptize, confirm, marry and confess and treat the sick. I ask the head man to gather everyone in the district at his home on

that date. He said he would. A handshake, an embrace and we're off.

From now on we are on a schedule. No matter what happens I must return to that place on that date. If the people gather and the Padre doesn't show up they'll never gather again when we ask.

For many days we head upstream. Wild life abounds — parrots, storks, swans, monkeys. Alligators are part of the scenery.

While traveling up river I only notify the people, mark dates. Down river, I'll do my priestly work.

When we reach the headwaters we take a day off. The tension eases. I read a couple of "who-dun-its" while the boy fishes for our supper.

The next day we start down river. About 2 p.m. we pull into the first place. It's the biggest house around, i.e., has two rooms, while most have one. There are no towns or settlements on these rivers. Just individual houses here, there and all over the map.

Some canoes have arrived before me.

After talking with the adults for a while, I gather the children for catechism and first communion class. For most of the afternoon, with breaks for a "procession" and teaching of hymns, I try to pour Christ's good doctrine into their heads. It's not easy.

Then I take them into the house for communion rehearsal. The brief encounter with a priest doesn't leave them with too much doctrine. We stretch our theology a bit to give the children of age Holy Communion. Next year or the year after when the priest returns 40% of them will be dead. The jungle is cruel to children.

After supper, the evening services. A hymn or two. The children sing with me. They learn hymns very quick-

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ly. The adults love the hymns as sung by the children. Everyone gets in a good mood.

Then an instruction on the rosary and Our Blessed Mother. Usually no one knows the *Credo*, the second half of the *Glory be to the Father*, nor the *Our Father*. So I make the response for them. About one-half can manage the *Hail Mary*. From what I can gather from the experience of years, whether poorly said or well said, our lovely mother in heaven likes our rosary, and she blesses the work because of it.

As far as real Catholic faith goes, there's not much here, although all are nominal Catholics. Voodoo and spiritism stain their Catholicism. Somehow unblemished remains their love for Mary.

Another hymn and it's time for the big sermon.

We're in a thatch-roofed, mud-wall-  
ed hut. Our light is a kerosene lamp and two candles. The furniture is an old table and some benches. Nothing else. The women occupy the benches. The men stand around the walls. The children sit on the floor around me and the table.

Mosquitoes abound and it is very hot.

I preach to a chorus of sound made by nursing babies, or their occasional wail when the milk gives out. Everyone is waving a towel or a handkerchief to beat off the mosquitoes. At times a man will break into my sermon with a, "we support that, Padre," or "good work, Padre, well said." They make comments during the whole talk. And when they disagree, they'll say so.

After the sermon, confessions. I sit on a box or a stool in the second room. If it is a single room house, I sit out in the jungle. Every square inch of my exposed skin is covered with a bitter, greasy insect repellent. But the mos-

quitoes bite through my habit and socks. So the only thing to do is hear the confessions and forget the mosquitoes.

It's about midnight when I finish. The confessions were long and tiring. Generally half are first confessions. This is the most difficult work of the priest on these trips.

I go down to the boat. For the past two hours I have been thinking about that clean water in the filter there. How can a cup of clean though warm water taste so good!

The next morning bright and early I go up to the house. I start taking down names for baptisms, confirmations and marriages. The people are gathering. The boat-boy is setting up the vestments on the table for Mass.

When the folks are gathered I vest and preach the first sermon of the morning. The Mass follows. The boat-boy tries to maintain order and silence during it. But the people who gather so infrequently must talk to their friends and relatives. I say Mass in a babel of sound.

I myself must quiet them down at Communion time. The first Communion should be as solemn as possible. It isn't, but the people are impressed by the solemnity that does show.

After Mass, another sermon. That finished, I unvest and begin the administration of the sacraments immediately, before the people begin to stray.

When mothers pass their children to the god-parents-to-be, the little ones wail like wounded monkeys. Since there are no diapers down here, all the proceeds of bodily functions go on the floor or on the unwary bystander. I long ago learned how to be an artful dodger.

Finally the work is done. I congratulate all, shake hands and trade em-

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braces. Everyone feels good.

One chore remains — to give out medicine. On the shore I set up my medicine chest. I'm no doctor but in the course of years I have done everything from pulling teeth to pulling an appendix. One night in town four of us, none doctors, did an appendectomy with perfect success. So now I'm not so hesitant about cleaning and dressing wounds and prescribing and giving simple medicines. Since I have to give something to everyone present I give the non-sick two aspirins. And then a holy picture to everyone and we're off for the next place.

We pull out with siren blasting. The people love the noise of the siren. I go to the rear deck and wave to them till we're out of sight.

It's 11 a.m. and now my oatmeal's ready. I eat it while the boy drives.

Down river we go to the next place where the whole process will be repeated. And then on to the next, and the next and next. So it goes for weeks.

Finally that blessed day arrives when all the babies are baptized and the rest of the work is done. I'm very tired and have lost a lot of weight. But there's magic, transforming magic in the thought of what has been done.

Christ has been renewed on this river, in one of Catholicism's most re-

mote outposts. Mary's praises have been sung. I'm beginning to think now that my fears and shame were nothing but Christ saying: "Listen, my boy, and don't ever forget. It's I who am doing the work. Lean on me." Nothing could be truer.

We manage to navigate the *chavascal* without error and then we break out into the lake. We're on our way home.

The last day is ordination, Christmas and V-E day all in one. And I've just scaled Mount Everest and swum the English Channel with one hand tied behind my back. Home. It means a broken down old house. But it also means speaking English again with my Redemptorist confreres. It means ice-water, gallons of it; it means a good game of bridge and then rest.

When we round the last bend in the lake and the town appears I can hardly speak. The boy and I exchange looks. He's glad too.

The town is not only New York. It is Chicago and St. Louis too. And the church steeple is the Statue of Liberty welcoming us back.

As we pull into port I say to her who has been first pilot, chief engineer and general moral support: "Thanks much, Mary, let's do this real soon again."

## Deliver Us

From the booklet, *The Mass for Everyman*, by Father James Anderson, comes the following pertinent extension of the phrase which closes the Lord's prayer:

"Deliver us from all evil, but especially deliver us from the evil of greed created by high pressure advertising.

Deliver us from greed for money.

Deliver us from greed for fancy clothes.

Deliver us from greed for shiny new automobiles.

Deliver us from greed for unnecessary appliances.

Deliver us from greed for bigger and better TVs.

And at the same time we shall be delivered from debt!"

Work

# What's On Your Bookshelf

*Francis M. Lee*

February is a good month not only for thinking of good things to read but also for casting out the devil of bad reading.

AT some shattering moment in the life of most of us we suddenly realize that just because a thing is printed does not necessarily mean that it is true. The thought purges us for future reading, but it surely can make us feel like fools about what we took for gospel truth in the past.

This new dawn breaks and we look at our morning newspaper in the new light; after all, we now tell ourselves, one man or group owns that newspaper and we can jolly well be sure that we are going to get his or their slant on everything that has happened in the last twenty-four hours, with the possible exception of the box score. We, the public, will not be thus dictated to, and are resentful at one person forming our opinion for us. At this stage there are but two courses left us. Either we start our own newspaper and give the public one more opinion (ours), or we ask ourselves if we have any solid principles by which we can calmly, unerringly evaluate what we read, size it up, sift it, salute it, or comfortably sneer at it. 'Tis a perilous thing, our journey through the land of print.

The journey begins early. It can begin for an eleven-year-old boy in a very well-ordered home. Depending on

what you mean by well-ordered. In this instance, the lad finds a "best seller" on the living room table. Too often, the allure starts with the jacket, the cover. The cover may have nothing or plenty to do with the actual contents of the book, but you can rather safely bet your last clean shirt that it will be on the voluptuous side. Somewhere on the jacket will be found the ravings of the critics. The word "lusty" will be discovered from one to four times in said ravings.

Peculiar thing oftentimes about best-sellers, jackets, blurbs. Right smack on the cover there is a splash of yellow, in the middle of which there screams out at us the modest message, "50,000 SOLD!" Now how about that? This is a brand new book, students, just on the bookstands this week, hot off the press, sirs, and the jacket says that 50,000 are sold. Just when did you all print that jacket? Or, (and we want to be fair) did fifty thousand people buy that book without any idea of what was in it? My! My! My! Oh, for a rich uncle in the printing business. To know the sheer, fine joy of selling 50,000 copies before I finish writing the last chapter.

But let us get back to the eleven-year-old Albert who has been examin-

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ing the jacket all this time. He knows how to read. Do you want him to read this book? It is going to open doors in his mind that can never again be closed. Are you sure he is all set for that, well-grounded, mentally formed, supplied with not only the principles of good morality, but more important, with the moral strength to subdue the burning curiosity that will arise in him? You would not dream of sending him out to play in cold weather without warm clothing, and yet you present his naked vulnerable soul to the searing tempest of those adult, suggestive, realistic love scenes and whatnots. Sex is a strong primal drive, and the Creator never meant it to be thus arbitrarily awakened and encouraged in one so young and so far removed from marriage and all legitimate outlet.

By no means is this meant to be a philosophical treatise on the principles involved in reviewing books. Rather let us cut through all principles to find the one great principle behind it all. Oliver Plunkett says it;

"I saw His Face upon the rose."

Beauty and God. God and beauty. The rose is beautiful simply because it is all that God meant it to be. And because it is that, it is perfect, and His Face is upon it.

Quickly then to the world of books and the writing thereof. Like the rose, a book will be beautiful and good and true only if, sooner or later, it is all that God meant it to be. We take up one of Dickens's novels. Oh, there is much evil portrayed in many of his characters, but it is the evil of the passing storm that must eventually give way before the good, the absolute, as it were, the sun. Right, justice, morality triumph. God's Face is there, perhaps not with such instinctive beauty as on the rose, but on the other hand,

Plunkett would not have written so lavishly about the mere seed of a rose-bush, its term of rotting in the ground, its dark death-like trance through the winter months, and yet God's Face was surely there all the time. In the last chapter, be it of the full-blown rose, or of a full-blown Dickensian morality, things will be the way God wanted them to. With this exquisite difference, the rose had to grow and be beautiful; the human being chose to be beautiful, to conform, not so much to Plunkett's fanciful Face of God, but rather to brass tacks morality, namely the Mind of God and what that Mind wanted of him. Such is moral beauty.

Now let us grow dank. Let us look over little Albert's shoulder, and see what has happened to beauty. In the fifth chapter of the book, we are already at the first divorce and re-marriage. We look for the Face of God, but He had already sent His Son down to call such goings-on adultery. Men and women were to grow and mature and meet and love and contract to be each other's spouse until death. God would hasten to accept and bless their contract; they would afford Him infant bodies so that He might create the souls He loved, and loved to create. The rose had come to bud. Then the crashing halt. Divorce. Marry again. God scowls and turns away from the hybrid.

But the novel must go on, so we follow the child of the divorced couple. She is seventeen after a while, and she meets this boy. Classic temptation and moral struggle. But it is bigger than both of them, so they go up to the mountains for a week. Some pages later she is shocked to find that she is going to have a baby. Abortion is pleasantly discussed as though it were

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not murder, but she finally marries her mountain friend in the name of honor. It is all right, though, because Mom and Dad called it quits after a while, and they are doing okay. After a while she calls it quits. And so on.

What in heavens name is wrong with our world? Are we so blasé, that we cannot even get depressed at such floutings of everything decent? Is it really enough for us that an author is master of his medium, an expert English scholar, genuinely gifted in narration, description, turn of phrase, depth of thought? Is that all there is to a book? If so, then we are simply animals who follow, drooling all the while, the zoo-keeper who can deftly cut our meat the way we like it, just the right turn of the knife, just the right depth, the perfect seasoning. We don't care if he is leading us into a cage, a pit, a happy hunting ground, or a slaughter-house. Just cut that meat right.

Just write that phrase beautifully. Just describe that moon perfectly. Just comment masterfully on the uselessness of it all, the bitterness of everything. Strike out our faith with one deft sentence. Put a question mark ever so demurely in the right place and make us laugh at the moral traditions of two thousand years. No rose will ever bear His Face again for us.

Look, little Albert, there is something beyond all those fine words. There is beauty in human life, but the author will not let you lift your head to see it. Those people in the book are not your mother and father. Your birth was precious, not sexy tabloid, to them. Beautiful words in a book are really good, only if they lead us to what is beautiful and good. Just like paint is good, but a Murillo can use it to lead us to love the Mother of God, and a

Goya can use the same paint, and just as artistically, to lead us in quite another and opposite direction.

Moral beauty, beauty in human life, means that the face of God is upon our actions. Look for that in a book even as you must look for it in your own life, your every action. Don't be enchanted, fooled by the words and phrases; look up to see where they are going. Cage, pit, slaughter-house? It is good for us thus, by tempting morsels, to lead an animal to his death, for we must eat. It is not good thus to seduce a human soul, for he must live forever. And if a book is treating human beings as though they were just animals that live and grew and rot away with no eternal future whatsoever, then that author is using his fine talent for words to call us away from preparing for our real destiny. We are animals to him, and he throws us well-cut meat, but he is setting us up for a case of eternal indigestion.

If a man would steal all your father's money, in your heart you would want to hate him, and the law would go after him. When he was captured, he would be put in jail. The commandments of God tell us "Thou shalt not steal." Police authority backs up that commandment, and your own heart told you that it was bad, wrong. God's Face was turned away because the man did an evil thing. But along comes a man who writes a book, and in that book he has a character who gets away with the same kind of stealing, grows rich, respected by everyone, and is never called to task for his robbery. Remember, God's Face is still turned away from him just as much as It is turned from the man who stole from your father. Maybe the author wants us to pity the thief and forgive him, but don't you be fooled by the pretty words. Once more the author is throw-



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ing us nice pieces of meat; he is treating us like animals that can steal the food off the kitchen table, and never be worried by conscience or apology. That author is a liar, his book is a lie, and that fine thing that we call moral beauty is missing from his book. Somebody used an acetylene torch on the rose.

However, it seems that most best sellers of late years are not much interested in the problem of stealing. The reason is that few readers are going to get excited about the portrayal of theft. And, if you want to sell a book, it seems that you must excite people. This is more securely done through pornography, which means impure writing. You see, when the man wrote about stealing, the reader was more or less content just to read about the bad action, but this pornography business makes you want to do the bad action. This time the author is really and actually leading our souls to the slaughter-house. If he talked that way about your sister, you would want to go gunning for him. You would suddenly realize that purity was not just a lot of "don'ts" from the catechism, but that it was something good and right and beautiful. It was the Face of God upon your sister.

Understand now, we are not saying that the book was pornographic simply because it dealt with an impure person. Otherwise, Mary Magdalen would never have been mentioned in the Scriptures. There are two points about the treatment of Mary Magdalen that make all the difference about this whole business. First of all, the evangelists who wrote the story do not talk about her in a lewd, suggestive way. Secondly, at the end of the road she is there beneath the cross, a saint of God. If the writers of our newsstand pocket-novel garbage would stick to those two

principles, well, we would soon find just who are the literary artists. Most of the Mickey Spillane crowd would have to quit writing, since their prime and only evident talent and tool is sex, exploited, ravaged, and condemned to the barnyard. Stray dog morality.

And the sad part of it all is that such books are not going to leave Albert as they found him. No book dealing with human moral activity leaves us quite the same. We unconsciously make our judgments as we go along. We tell ourselves whether the thing was right or wrong. And if Albert keeps reading such trash as he grows into manhood, after a while the bad things won't look so wrong. He will quit arguing with himself. After all, he will tell himself, that is the way human nature is; after all, sex is only natural; after all, Albert will tell Albert that Albert is human, too. Only human. He will begin to look at things in a little different light.

So let's get it straight right now, Albert. And Alberta. Whether or not you live by the principles of Christ, you are going to be judged by them. Don't kid yourselves as you grow into young manhood and womanhood. You are beyond the stage where you can sin in the dark; you are not a pagan; you sin in the light. You KNOW! Maybe the immoral literature shall have lowered your ideals and principles beyond all reckoning, but you made your little decisions all along the line. Maybe Alberta's morality is quite a warped little mess as she dreams along over *True Confessions*, but she knew something was wrong; that's why she hid the magazine from her mother. You cannot take one pattern for living without throwing away the other one. Perhaps you have finally tossed out your Christian principles. Don't worry; Christ has the master copy of them, and He is



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waiting to go over them with you, line by line, on judgment day.

And as to you, dear parents, let's have a "Keep Our Children Clean" day. Go over your books and magazines like a tigress protecting her cubs,

and there is plenty to protect a child from on too many bookshelves in too, too many Christian homes.

And may the Face of God be on you.

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### *One-Half per cent for God*

Our national personal income in 1952 was 251 billion dollars; up 11.5 per cent over the previous year's figure. This is how Americans spent their money that year, according to the United States Department of Commerce.

- 23% food
- 21% housing and household operation
- 10% clothing, jewelry, etc.
- 9% taxes
- 9% health and personal care
- 5% recreation
- 5% savings
- 5% beer, wine, liquor
- 2% tobacco
- 1½% welfare activities
- ½% church contributions

Just imagine! The average American spends ten times as much on liquor as he gives to his church. If money is to be a standard of judgment, he thinks four times as much of his tobacco as he does of his God. One might add that the same average American has pretty much of a closed mind on the subject of church contributions. He thinks high, wide and handsome in every other respect. He aims at living in a ranch house, driving a Chrysler, sending his children to the finest colleges—but when it comes to his church envelope, a quarter will do, or, at most, a dollar. Why? Why do we treat God so shabbily? It's baffling because we depend on Him for nothing less than our eternal salvation.

We're going to be awfully embarrassed on Judgment Day when God gets out those statistics on our expenditures, with religion at the very bottom—a measly one-half of one per cent!

*Michael Monday in Our Sunday Visitor*

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### *Difference in Rank*

In heaven the rich  
Man, by an ironic switch,  
May find himself much lower than  
The digger of a ditch.

LGM

# For Non-Catholics Only

Louis G. Miller

## Ex-priests

*Objection:* Recently I listened to a lecture by an ex-priest. He said there were lots of ex-priests like himself, and that they even published a magazine called *The Converted Catholic*. What have you got to say about that?

*Answer:* That there are so-called ex-priests, no one can deny. These are men who, after long and careful thought, took upon themselves the duties of the priesthood. No one forced them to do so; in fact, they were given solemn warnings as the time of ordination approached that they were to consider most seriously the step they were taking, and to take it only if they were prepared for a lifetime of sacred responsibility.

But the ex-priests found after a time that they were unwilling to fulfill their duties. They balked at the commands of legitimate authority. In more than a few cases, the vow of celibacy was the stumbling block; they took "wives" unto themselves, and thus cut themselves off from their active priesthood.

Certainly there can be no logical argument against the truth of the Catholic Church in the conduct of such as these. It was never promised by Christ that all His priests would be saints, or even that all of them would remain faithful to their commitments. One of His own close friends, Judas, turned out to be a traitor. Christ Himself said, looking down the centuries: "It is necessary that scandals come, yet woe unto those by whom they come." Human nature being what it is, there will always be some who are weak, and some also who are evil.

The surprising thing indeed is not so much that there are weaklings, but that they are so few. All priests being human, have their faults, but the great majority remain faithful in the main to their often trying and difficult responsibilities.

We have heard of and seen the magazine known as *The Converted Catholic*, and it does indeed contain articles against the Catholic Church by ex-priests. There is a kind of sad indecency in the way these former shepherds of the flock now exploit before the eyes of believer and scoffer alike the faults and foibles of the Church's human side. It is pathetic to see them attempting to enlist logic on the side of their human weakness and rebellion against authority.

To non-Catholic readers we would say: pity these ex-priests, pray for them, but be wary of the distorted picture they may try to draw of the Catholic Church. A rebellious and runaway child is hardly a safe guide in drawing a picture of the home he has abandoned.

# Throughway to Holiness

No doubt there are many Catholics, especially converts, who have never heard of the opportunity that is theirs of belonging to a Third Order. Here is a preliminary briefing on the subject.

Louis G. Miller

**"O**PEN the door to success!"

That sentence was the advertising come-on some years ago for a correspondence course in business education.

With considerably more truth, the subject of this article might be termed a sure means of *spiritual* success. Indeed, the "Third Order," rightly and widely used, has been called an apt means for the spiritual reform of the whole world.

Most Catholics, no doubt, have heard the phrase "the Third Order," and most know vaguely that it is a spiritual organization of some kind to which lay people can belong. It is, however, not just another society on a par with the parish sodalities. The Third Order represents a complete dedication of one's life to certain specified ideals; it even proposes a daily rule of life which is comprehensive, yet wonderfully suited to people in the world with their round of duties in shop or home.

Said Pope Leo XIII, himself a tertiary (as members are called), in the course of a letter approving the program, as many Popes before and after

him have approved it: "The Third Order is my plan for social reform."

Now there are many different aspects to the struggle for social justice, and Pope Leo XIII, a great crusader in this field, knew it well. Yet he wished to imply that all the other necessary adjustments would follow if the Third Order became firmly and universally established.

This article is published because we feel there are many people who are dissatisfied with themselves and their own mediocrity; they are genuinely concerned with bettering themselves and making the world a better place to live in, too. Some of these may find that the Third Order exactly suits their needs.

First, some preliminary notes.

There are no fewer than ten different Third Orders, affiliated with as many different congregations of religious, such as the Carmelite Third Order, the Dominican, the Augustinian, etc. For the purpose of simplicity in this article, the Franciscan Third Order alone will be directly described, since this is the best known and most widely

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distributed. But all of the Third Orders have in common the purpose of opening out before people in the world a way of perfection.

But where, the reader may ask, does the term *Third Order* come from?

St. Francis of Assisi, father of all Franciscans, actually founded three separate groups of religious. There was first the order of Friars Minor, or "Lesser Brethren," which is divided into three families, popularly called the Franciscans, the Conventuals and the Capuchins.

His second order was for women only, and is commonly designed today as the Poor Clares, after their first mother, the gentle and heroic St. Clare. These sisters lead a very strict and cloistered life, the purpose of which is to sanctify themselves and save other souls by their continuous prayer and penance.

Besides those who gave up their homes and their possessions to follow him, there were large numbers of lay-folk, many of them married, who were attracted by the life and teaching of St. Francis. For them also the heart of the saint was moved by pity and zeal. With the help of Cardinal Ugolino (who later became Pope Gregory IX), he drew up a rule of life by which they might serve God in a more perfect manner even while living in the world. This happened in the year 1221, and his first tertiaries were a married couple, Blessed Lucius and his wife, Belladonna.

Here then was the origin of the "Third Order Secular," which was to flourish mightily down through the centuries. Some thirty popes, (many of them tertiaries) have officially and enthusiastically approved it, and on its roster it has counted a host of distinguished personages in every age and

every civilized nation. A king and a queen are its patrons: St. Louis of France, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary; it prays also to St. Rose of Viterbo, St. Margaret of Cortona, St. Thomas More, tertiaries all, along with numerous other saints and blessed. The poet Dante, the painter Giotto, the novelist Cervantes (author of *Don Quixote*), and the musician Liszt represent a small sampling of the distinguished tertiaries to be found in other fields of endeavor.

There are, according to informal estimates, more than three million Franciscan tertiaries in the world today. In the United States there are some 1100 separate groups, each group being called a Fraternity. They are scattered up and down the length and breadth of the land, and they embrace young and old (14 is the minimum age), married and unmarried, and people from all classes and types of background and all possible professions. All are united in the desire to serve God in a more perfect manner, while attending to the normal routine of duties proper to people in the world.

The special service of God which tertiaries take on themselves is expressed in a rule of life. There are fourteen points in the Franciscan tertiary rule, and we list them here without initial comment so that the reader may see them as a whole, and ponder their simplicity and their wholesomeness:

1. In all things let the members of the Third Order avoid extremes of cost and style, observing the golden mean suited to each one's station in life.
2. Let them with utmost caution keep away from dances and shows which savor of license, as well as from all forms of dissipation.

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3. Let them be temperate in eating and drinking, and devoutly say grace before and after meals.

4. They shall fast on the vigil of the Immaculate Conception and on that of St. Francis; they are to be highly commended who, according to the original rule of the tertiaries, also either fast on Fridays or abstain from flesh meat on Wednesdays.

5. They shall approach the sacraments of penance and the Holy Eucharist every month.

6. Tertiaries among the clergy, since they recite the divine office daily, shall be under no further obligation in this regard. Lay members who recite neither the canonical hours nor the little office of the Blessed Virgin Mary shall say daily twelve Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glorys, unless they are prevented by ill health.

7. Let those who are entitled to make a last will and testament do so in good time.

8. In their daily life, let them strive to lead others by good example and to promote practices of piety and good works. Let them not allow books or publications which are a menace to virtue to be brought into their homes, or to be read by those under their care.

9. Let them earnestly maintain the spirit of charity among themselves and towards others. Let them strive to heal discord wherever they can.

10. Let them never take an oath except when necessary. Let them never use indecent language or vulgar jokes. Let them examine their conscience every night whether they have offended in this regard; if they have, let them repent and correct their fault.

11. Let those who can do so attend Mass every day. Let them attend the monthly meetings called by the Prefect.

12. Let them contribute according to their means to a common fund,

from which the poorer members may be aided, especially in time of sickness, or provision made for the dignity of divine worship.

13. Let the officers either personally visit a sick member, or send someone to perform the services of charity. In case of serious illness, let them remind and urge the sick person to arrange in time the affairs of his soul.

14. At the funeral of a deceased member the resident and visiting tertiaries shall assemble and say in common five decades of the rosary for the soul of the departed. Moreover, let the priests at the Holy Sacrifice and the lay members, if possible, having received Holy Communion, pray with fervent charity for the eternal rest of the deceased.

It will be noted that there are no extremes of piety imposed by this rule. There are no provisions which cannot normally be fulfilled even by married people with families. The whole list breathes a spirit of mildness and moderation; yet its simplicity is deceptive; the complete fulfillment of this program might engage the lifetime effort of a great saint. Certainly anyone who tries to live wholeheartedly by such a rule will encompass his life with a very wholesome spirit of sacrifice and the active love of God.

Since their fourth national congress in 1936, the tertiaries of St. Francis in the United States are pledged to promote, in the spirit of their profession and rule, the following three-point program.

1. To commit no sin in heart or hand for the sake of goods of fortune.

2. To observe moderation in acquiring and enjoying goods of fortune.

3. To administer all goods of fortune in such a way that they will serve the common good no less than per-

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sonal advantage.

*Unselfishness* is obviously the basic virtue underlying this program. The tertiary has as his chief duty in a selfish world to be wholly unselfish in his service of God and his fellow-man. There is dynamite in such a program for exploding the world's dangerous complacency in wrong-doing.

Take the case of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Braun. The name is invented, but the people are real enough, and they are members of St. Anthony's Fraternity of the Franciscan Third Order in St. Louis. They are in a position to answer a few practical questions the reader might feel inclined to ask.

Where, Mr. and Mrs. Braun, did you first hear about the Third Order?

A friend of ours, a bachelor, got us interested. He was a member himself, and he told us how much it meant to him. He said there were lots of married people with families who were members, and we later found this to be true.

Did you join the Third Order right away?

*Mr. Braun:* No, it took some time for the idea to seep in. We were ordinary Catholics, and certainly there was nothing special about our practice of the faith. We thought at first we weren't good enough for that sort of thing.

*Mrs. Braun:* As a matter of fact, we were a little leery of the whole idea. It sounded like going into a monastery, as if a person needed a special kind of religious vocation. But we were curious enough to attend a meeting. There we learned that the obligations are by no means too difficult for married people.

What actually are the requisites for membership?

One must be at least 14 years of

age, of good character, peace-loving, of tried fidelity in the practice of the Catholic faith, and loyal to the Roman Church and to the apostolic See.

Any practical Catholic, it would seem, fulfills those conditions.

Of course. The more we heard, the more interested we became. We decided to try it out, so we entered the novitiate.

That word you'll have to explain.

Gladly. It means simply a period of preparation. At its outset, there was a little ceremony in which we knelt before the Father Director of the Fraternity and received from him the habit, the cord and a lighted candle signifying faith.

Do you mean that you actually received the brown, outer garment such as is worn by the Franciscans?

Not exactly. The habit of the tertiary is a small scapular, ordinarily worn beneath the outer clothing, and the same thing holds for the small cord, which symbolizes chastity, according to one's state in life. But the habit and cord are highly distinctive marks of the tertiary. In certain circumstances, he is permitted to wear the full habit, and even to be buried in it.

When did you finally become full-fledged members?

Our novitiate, or period of trial, lasted a year. During that time we attended the monthly meetings faithfully, and studied the tertiary rule. We also tested ourselves in keeping it, and found that we could observe its main provisions even in our busy family life. Then on a certain day we were admitted to our profession.

What kind of a ceremony was that?

It was very impressive. We knelt before the priest, with our scapular and cord worn outwardly, and read a formula in which we promised "in the

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presence of Almighty God, in honor of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of Blessed Father Francis, and of all the saints, to observe all the time of my life the commandments of God and the rule of the Third Order."

That sounds rather formidable. Is it a mortal sin to break your rule?

By no means. We make a solemn pledge and promise, but it is expressly specified that the provisions of the rule do not of themselves bind under pain of sin.

Suppose a member leaves the Third Order, does he commit a serious sin in doing so, after his promise and pledge?

No, such a one does not commit a sin if he leaves. But of course he deprives himself of many graces and helps in so doing.

What actual benefits, Mr. and Mrs. Braun, would you say have come to you from your Third Order membership?

*Mrs. Braun:* Well, of course, there are the special graces in our every-day life which are very real to us indeed. But then also the Third Order has given to our whole lives a sense of direction, of dedication, of accomplishment which we seemed to be lacking before. We are far from being perfect; we still have our faults, and fall short of the Third Order ideals. But with a goal to strive for such as ours, life with its joys and sorrows takes on a new meaning altogether. Our duties in the home and in our parish, we like to think, are better and more cheerfully fulfilled because of our dedication.

*Mr. Braun:* I like to feel that being a tertiary has helped me to be happy and cheerful and at peace with myself and the world. Franciscan piety, you know, is the opposite of long-faced and sad. St. Francis himself was always glad and joyful, even when suffering most, and you can't be a tertiary without capturing some of that spirit for yourself. The Communists have their Third International of espionage, fostering mistrust and bitterness and strife. But long before Lenin, St. Francis founded his Third Order to foster the spirit of charity and peace among all classes of men. Perhaps you might say the fate of the world itself depends on which set of ideas wins out: those of the Third International, or those of the Third Order.

Suppose I wanted to join the Third Order, how would I go about it?

Well, if you live in one of the larger cities, there will doubtless be a Fraternity in the place with which you can become directly affiliated. If you live in a small town, with no Fraternity close by, you can still be an "isolated tertiary." Such a one keeps the tertiary rule as best he can in his special circumstances. Anyone seeking information can secure it by writing to

National Secretariat

8140 Spring Mill Rd.

Indianapolis 44, Indiana.

Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Braun, for answering these questions. May you and all tertiaries realize ever more fully your potential for the love of God and charity toward your fellow-men.

Many people who believe that lightning never strikes twice in the same place may be surprised to know that the Empire State building in New York has been hit by lightning 226 times in the last ten years. The tallest building in the world, over 1000 feet, it may invite the spark even though the people inside suffer no harm.



# Problems of Professional People

## The Catholic Social Worker

In recent years the social worker has become an important person. She receives a special academic training for her career, and is deservedly regarded as exercising a profession, like the doctor or the lawyer. (We shall refer to the social worker in the feminine gender, since the majority of social workers are women). The scope of her activities has become very wide. She may be deputed by her agency to furnish food and clothing to a poor family or to settle a quarrel between a husband and wife or to induce a couple to give better care to their children or to counsel delinquent boys and girls. These and a multitude of similar assignments may be delegated to the social worker, so that we can truthfully say that the relief of almost any form of human need or misery can be her professional task.

Many Catholics are engaged in professional social work, either in Catholic or in secular agencies. Their choice of a state of life is admirable, for social work affords them many opportunities of fulfilling Our Lord's command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The Catholic social worker should never consider her professional work a mere job. It is rather an apostolate, a fruitful means of applying the principles of Christian charity to the conditions of modern life. Hence, in all her activities the social worker who is a practical Catholic will regard herself as an agent of Jesus Christ rather than of some earthly organization.

Sometimes difficult moral problems will beset the Catholic social worker, especially when she is engaged by a secular agency. Thus, she may be expected to advise a poverty-stricken couple not to have more children. As this is understood in non-Catholic agencies it usually means that she is expected to recommend contraception. This the Catholic social worker may never do, though when it is truly desirable that the couple have no more children, she may suggest abstinence or the use of Rhythm. Similarly, she may never advise a woman to be sterilized as a contraceptive measure, no matter how difficult the economic conditions of the family may be.

Sometimes the social worker is assigned to care for a family and finds out that the parents are not validly married, according to Catholic standards. It may even be that one of them is a Catholic divorced from a previous marriage, with the true spouse still living. In such circumstances she may give material help and recommendations regarding the rearing of the children, but she may not do or say anything that can be interpreted as an approval of the "bad marriage." On the other hand, she need not rebuke the couple for living in sin, unless she has good reason to hope that she can induce them to remedy the situation.

In a word, the Catholic social worker, like every other Catholic engaged in a profession, may not make a distinction between her professional activities and her private conduct, persuading herself that in the former capacity she may recommend a course of action that she could not suggest as a private individual. In every field of life a Catholic must be faithful to the teachings and the moral standards of the Catholic Church.

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D.,  
Catholic University of America.

What is . . .

## ..... "The Heroic Act"

A very special form of spiritual surrender for generous souls.

*Wm. F. Cummings*

**Y**OU are standing in the back yard. It's an autumn-leaves bon-fire, and two little neighbor boys are racing around it, laughing and shouting to each other. You turn away to rake in more leaves when, suddenly, one of the boys trips, and goes hurtling head-long into the center of the blaze. There's a scream! Agonizing. Torturing. You can see the lad twisting and rolling in the burning leaves, unable to free himself. Blinded by the flames, choked by the smoke, screaming for help.

What will you do? Will you shout to him to grab the end of the rake-handle? Or will you race into the fire, risking a third degree burn, and drag him out yourself?

Every Catholic must realize that he is standing in the back yard of eternity. Not far away there is a place called purgatory, and you can think of it as a fire in which thousands of souls — your mom and dad, your child, perhaps — are twisting and rolling in the flames, unable to help themselves, and begging for your help.

Now there are two ways in which you can help them.

1st: You can offer prayers for them; just as you could offer the rake-handle to the little boy in the bon-fire. That way, you don't get burnt yourself.

2nd: You can race right into the fires of purgatory, risking a severe burn, in order to shorten their stay. And this is what we call "the heroic act."

It works like this:

For each act of virtue, attending Mass, saying a prayer, being charitable, etc., God gives us three rewards:

1st: An increase in sanctifying grace; plus an increase in merit, which is your assurance of a higher place in heaven. God breathes into our soul the air of heaven, which is the very life of God Himself. And we become more and more acclimatized to the life we shall live later on.

2nd: A certain power over God. He allows Himself to be touched by our prayers, and guarantees to answer them.

3rd: A check from the bank of purgatory.

Now No. 1 and No. 2 are of such a kind that we can never give them away. They come to us (and for us alone) every time we show God that we love Him. But No. 3, the check from purgatory, is the price we pay to throw open the barred gates of the fiery furnace, and barge right into the center of the blaze.

Theologians call this check "satisfactory value." It's a guaranteed affidavit, endorsed by Almighty God, which entitles you to so much time off the purgatory which you deserve for all your sins. When you die all these checks will be totaled up (together with the prayers and Masses said for you after your death) and the difference will be subtracted from your stay in the purging fires of exile. In other words, you're paying your debt here

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by prayers and sacrifices, instead of waiting for purgatory.

Now by the heroic act, we cash all these checks, present and future, and use them for bailing out other souls . . . not our own. We tell God:

"Here, Lord, take the satisfactory value from my good works for the rest of my life, and all that will be applied to me after my death, and use them (rather: let Our Blessed Mother use them) for the souls now suffering in purgatory; especially . . . N."

Or, more simply: "Let me work now, and burn later, for them!"

The idea then, is this: We become the servants of purgatory and the debtors of God. We dedicate our lives to the freeing of suffering souls. Every day is pay-day, and we try to earn as many checks as we possibly can so that we can cash them all for the poor souls. We spend our own justly earned bail-money on them, and then abandon ourselves to the mercy of God — as beggars — when our time comes.

What does the Church say about this?

Popes Benedict XIII, Pius VI, and Pius IX have given written documents of approval to the heroic act. And all three have granted special spiritual favors to those who feel called to make it. Such as the plenary indulgence for every communion, and another for hearing Mass on Monday, or even Sunday, if you can't make it Monday. And all theologians agree that the heroic act can lead one to sanctity. For it can give a person a constant motive and a certain ease in performing extraordinary acts of virtue.

Well, why don't more people make it then?

Why don't more people race into fires? The heroic act *is* heroic. And here's why:

Let's say you have talked this over with your confessor (for you should never go through with it without his permission) and have decided to make the heroic act. The first thing you should do is gain a plenary indulgence *for yourself*, which simply consists in this: Detest all your sins, even the least, resolve to avoid all voluntary sin at any cost, and then fulfill the conditions for the plenary indulgence you have chosen to earn. Now your own debt with purgatory is cancelled. So you make the act, and start working to cancel other people's debts. Fine. And how easy . . . if you were sure you would never sin again. But: "The just man falls seven times a day." It's certain that you will commit some sins afterwards. Now if you hadn't made the act, you could gain an indulgence now and then that would keep your slate clean. But it's too late now. You've given those indulgences away; and not only those, but even when you get to purgatory and your relatives have Masses said for you . . . those Masses go to some one else.

In other words, you have placed yourself right in the middle of the blaze, until your full debt is paid.

But will God exact the full debt?

It depends.

If you plunge into this thing wildly, with the secret ambition of confiding to your intimates: "Well, I made the heroic act, you know . . ." and then proceed to forget all about your responsibilities three weeks later, chances are — you'll have a long purgatory.

But if you have the assurance of several years of good life behind you, and the firm determination to continue; then develop a real passion for writing these spiritual checks every day . . . you'll have nothing to worry about. The crowd of poor souls whom you

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have bailed out of purgatory will be there waiting for you when you die. They will be Saints of God then — powerful lawyers in the court of heaven. And they will plead your case (together with Mary) in the loudest, most

eloquent terms that heaven has ever heard. And they will be pleading before the Judge who once said:

"Whatever you do for these, the least of my brethren, you do for Me." God is never outdone in generosity.

## Signposts Upward

### Killing and Kindness

In the fifth, sixth and seventh commandments of God, the duty is imposed upon us of respecting the rights of others: life, property, and the rights connected with marriage. In that respect there is both a negative and positive aspect. Consider this for a moment in reference to the fifth commandment: Thou shalt not kill:

#### I. Negative

Most Christians are familiar enough with what the fifth commandment forbids. Actual murder, suicide or deliberate bodily injury inflicted upon another are the most obvious items. In the concept of murder, of course, the Catholic Church has always included the sin of deliberate abortion, since the child once conceived is a human being with an immortal soul. Also forbidden by this commandment are anger, quarrelling, and fighting, since these in the very nature of things inflict injury on the personality. Whether they are light or serious, of course, depends on the degree to which they are indulged.

In the spiritual order the sin of scandal falls under this commandment. To scandalize someone, in the classic meaning of the word, means to lead him into sin, and thus to inflict grave injury on his soul.

#### II. Positive

The genuine Christian will not be content with avoiding the actions which this commandment forbids. His vision opens out on a wider horizon. He is not content with avoiding injury to his neighbor. True respect and love for his fellow-man make him want to be a source of help and encouragement so far as opportunity permits him.

Prudence, of course, keeps him on his guard against becoming a mere meddler or busybody. But on the other hand, when he sees his neighbor in need, he gladly gives assistance. In this sense, the so-called corporal and spiritual works of mercy are the reverse side of the respect for one's neighbor imposed by the fifth commandment.

True charity towards his neighbor makes the genuine Christian patient in putting up with the faults and failings of his neighbor, and the annoyances inevitably attached to all human relationships. It makes him ready and willing to forgive all injuries received, after the example of Christ, whose first word on the cross was one of forgiveness. Last of all, it makes him conscious of his duty to give a good example to all men by his truly Christian conduct, thus influencing them to what is good, not dragging them down to what is evil.

In a sentence, as Christ put it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."



## Thoughts for the Shut-in

Leonard F. Hyland

### New Year Optimism

Here is a New Year's resolution highly appropriate for all shut-ins: To make a special effort towards perfecting the virtue of hope with its external accompaniments of genuine cheerfulness and joy. The old year is dead with its sad evidences of our weakness and frailty. The new year is beginning; it brings a new opportunity to serve God and to throw oneself with new vigor into the lifelong process of self-betterment.

It may at first sight seem rather tactless to talk about joy and cheerfulness as virtues proper to the sick. Surely they, so the world might suppose, are entitled to feelings of sadness and discouragement, nay even to dark pessimism. Those who have some transient illness it is true, may look forward to a cure. But what of those, the world asks, who are chronic invalids; what of those seemingly hopeless cases in which the victims seem doomed to lifelong inactivity and perhaps unrelieved suffering? How can we dare to speak of joy and cheerfulness to them?

Yet we do speak of these virtues, and we urge them particularly on those who are in dire straits. We do not imply that it is *easy* for them to be hopeful and optimistic. We say only that it is the ideal towards which they should strive. And there are several motives which can help them.

Even on the natural plane, much good can be accomplished by the shut-in who is patient and cheerful and considerate of those around him. Somehow, by that strange influence which arises out of human companionship, the family of such a shut-in profits by his attitude, and the home becomes a brighter, happier place.

On the supernatural level, of course, there can be no doubt that God wishes the shut-in to be governed by hope and optimism in the best sense of the word. To be optimistic is to expect the best, and the shut-in is entitled to just that kind of confidence. In God's providence, "the best" does not always or necessarily include a physical cure, although even this may be hoped for if it is in accordance with the divine will. But if not, the shut-in can still be hopeful of final, complete and unending happiness and joy. God has solemnly promised it to His faithful servants, and no one serves Him more faithfully than the one who is willing to accept patiently the cross of sickness which He sends.

The supreme model of this Christian optimism is Christ Himself. "I have a baptism with which I am to be baptized, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished." He referred in these words to the baptism of His suffering; He even longed for His suffering, because He knew it was God's will, and by it He would save the world. In this spirit let the shut-in accept his cross, knowing that God is close by to help him when it grows heavy, and that in a short time the period of suffering will be past, and the time of unending happiness at hand.

# On Teen-Agers'

## Dress and Adornment

Reminders of some fundamental principles concerning dress and appearance for young people.

**T**HESE lines are directed to teen-age girls rather than to teen-age boys. The female of the species, even in her younger years, is more deeply concerned "with what shall be worn" (clothing) and "with what shall be put on" (facial adornment etc.) than the male of the species.

An incidental word, however, addressed to teen-age boys on *their* dress, if not on their adornment, may not be out of place. In common with the rest of the human race boys must cover themselves with clothes. It is good for them to know to what extent they should go in carrying out this task.

First of all, boys harm themselves very much if they are slovenly and untidy in the way they dress and if they are careless in regard to the cleanliness that should characterize both their clothes and their bodies. They lower the respect that they should have for themselves, and they lose the good opinion and regard of others.

Always to be in need of a haircut, to go about with the hair seldom combed, to maintain black fingernails as though the hands were in mourning, to wear torn garments, soiled linen, unshined shoes, to look like a tramp who has slept all night in his clothes — these are the signs of a boy who is still a child. Like a small child, he has not as yet learned to take care of the essential things that a child generally learns at a very early age. He has really not learned as yet to dress himself.

*Ernest F. Miller*

This kind of boy has to have somebody go after him to pick up the things that he has dropped. He has to have somebody inspect his person before he ever dares appear in public to make sure that at least the surface dirt and dust have been removed from that part of his person that people can see, and that his clothes have a semblance of order about them. Pity the girl who gets such a one for a husband. She will have to be a valet and a servant as well as a wife and a companion.

Of course, the fact that a boy does not have the money to buy expensive clothes need be no mark against him. Inexpensive clothes are the badge of poverty; and poverty is the badge of kinship with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was a poor man, with none of the fine and fancy clothes to His back that the possession of much money might have brought Him. Nor was Jesus Christ ashamed of the fact that His clothes were not from the best shops of His day. Nor did that fact detract from His dignity.

But Our Lord was always neat and clean. That fact is certain. Poverty as expressed in the pattern, the cut and the quality of one's suits and shoes and hats should never mean ragged, filthy suits and shoes and hats. Soap is cheap; so also are thread and nee-

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dles; so also is the effort that goes into the maintaining of a neat and presentable appearance. Neatness and cleanliness are not weakness. Slovenliness is weakness.

It is hardly necessary to write anything for those boys who go to the opposite extreme in the matter of their dress. One word should suffice. These boys are sometimes more vain of their looks and their clothes than the vainest of the girls. They curl and comb their hair until they almost pull it out by the roots; they spend hours in the bathroom polishing and shining up their heads and their hides until the rest of the family nearly has to break down the door to get them out; they are forever worried about the tiniest blemish or imperfection that appears on their face. They cannot pass a mirror without peering deeply into its depths as a preliminary step to the work of squeezing and excavating their face until the imperfection, no matter how minor, is removed.

Such vanity in dress and in looks is seriously advised against. To allow a tendency like that to grow is to drain oneself of manliness, of masculinity. It is to become effeminate. No real boy wants to be that.

And that suffices for the boys and their dress. Now for the girls.

All that was said for the boys and to the boys about neatness and cleanliness can be said for and to the girls also. More so. Neatness and cleanliness are an even greater "must" for young ladies than for young men. Delicacy, a fresh and clean fragrance, a kind of whiteness that one associates with innocence and that is the very opposite of grime and disorderliness, are some of the things that make young ladies so attractive.

Teen-age girls should not only be clean and neat at all times but they should also remember that there is something to the expression that "clothes make the man" — in this case, "the girl," of course.

Pursuing the style of the moment, some girls dress as though they actually wanted to make themselves look ugly. They wear sloppy shirts, trousers that do not seem to fit, shoes that are scuffed, and hair that looks as though it had been cut by a meat ax. The roses in the garden are besmirched and their beauty destroyed because style demands the desecration.

Dressing in this manner is perfectly in order if a girl wants to perform a supreme act of charity and gives herself over to a day of coal-heaving or ditch-digging in the place of a man who is too old to work, or for the support of an aged mother who would otherwise become a public charge. At such times overalls, scuffed shoes and long-tailed shirts are called for. But such clothes are not called for as ordinary, everyday apparel.

A few years ago some American soldiers were crossing the country on a train on their way home after serving overseas for a long time. They were hungry for the sight of an American girl. They had seen the girls of the countries where they had served; they had not found these girls unattractive. But what they wanted more than anything else was the sight of an *American* girl. For their money, the American girl was the most beautiful and the most wonderful of all the girls of the world. So said their memory.

What did they see?

Their train stopped at a station. Not far from the track was a group of the long longed-for American girls. But what a sight those girls were. The usual



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thing — blue jeans, shirttails, dirty shoes, tangled hair. One look was enough for the soldiers. As the train pulled out of the station, they were heard to remark, "Maybe the girls we left behind in the foreign countries were not so bad after all. At least they didn't look like tramps."

However, the sloppiness of a girl's dress, bad though it may be, is not half so important a consideration as the *modesty* of a girl's dress. Modesty is the command of God. Immodesty is the temptation of the devil. Girls think that they are being modern and up to date when they wear immodest clothes. The truth of the matter is that they are only joining hands with the devil for the destruction of souls. They are causing people to commit sin.

What is modesty in dress?

Modesty in dress means that a girl wears sufficient clothing to cover the body, and especially those parts of the body that may be a source of temptation to those who see her. Very often half-nakedness is a greater danger than complete nakedness. The girl who wears clothes that partially expose the body and that are so designed as to inflame the imagination does an immense amount of harm. Only on judgment day will it be known to the world at large how many mortal sins she caused.

Such a girl not only leads others into sin but she also is guilty of mortal sin herself if her clothes are excessively suggestive, that is, if her skirt is too short, if her neckline is too low, if her sweater is too tight, if her blouse is too transparent. Scandal means that one person leads another person into sin. It makes little difference whether this is done by actually teaching the person how to commit the sin or by leading the person into sin by bad example or by any other means that may

be the direct or indirect cause of the sin.

Many mortal sins would never have been committed had it not been for the immodestly-clad body of a young woman. To commit a mortal sin was the farthest thing from many a man's mind until a girl came along and performed for him the service that Eve performed for Adam. Eve accomplished her evil through an apple. The modern, half-dressed teen-age girl does it through the exposure of her body.

Our Lord said that it were better if the giver of scandal had a millstone tied around her neck and that she were cast into the depths of the sea. He did not want the giver of scandal to be given even a gravestone on which a notice might be carved as to whose dust lay here in the ground. That is what God wants done with the girl who is so worldly-minded that she will wear any style that pagan designers think up, even though it means the causing of a hundred or a thousand mortal sins.

It is too bad that so many prominent women, and sometimes Catholic women, wear dresses for television programs that are definitely vulgar and quite often downright immodest. No *lady*, of course, ever appears in public like that. But those who fall short of the ideal that a real lady keeps before the eyes of her soul do not hesitate to come into the homes of millions of people disgustingly undressed. One would expect nudity in a burlesque show; but not in some of the respectable evening television shows that are supposed to be for all the members of the family.

Catholic teen-age girls should not imitate these hardened, brazen women of the entertainment world whose bodies possibly will be their damnation. They should imitate rather the

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great ladies of the past whose memories have never been forgotten.

If the Blessed Virgin were alive today, would she appear in public in the extreme off-shoulder formal, in the sinfully abbreviated swim suit, in clothes so close-fitting that every contour of the body would be minutely and clearly accentuated? Would the beautiful Sts. Agnes and Agatha and Cecilia, whose perfection of face and body was known far and wide, feel it necessary to copy the cheap styles of the day in order to win and to keep the love of those around them? Absolutely not. Modesty was a virtue that they treasured. In not a few cases girls like these gave up their lives for its preservation. Their names are as well known as though the girls lived in our own times. The names of the millions of other girls who had no regard for modesty are forgotten.

The girl who needs the trick of bodily exposure to win friends confesses openly that she lacks the charm and personality, or rather the will to develop the charm and personality, necessary to win friends. She does the easy thing. She uses sex. And she attracts friends. But they are friends who are attracted only by the power of sex, "friends" who are inflamed with desire and unmoved by morality. The "good" man runs fast past such a girl. He knows danger (for himself) when he sees it. So, the half-dressed girl loses out entirely on the very type of young man whom she would like most to have for a friend.

If this girl is pursued, if she is inflicted with indignities, if she is seriously tempted, she has only herself to blame. She started the fire. Let her now try to put it out. Oftentimes the girl who cries out against the prowler and the attacker should be the first one to go to jail. Had it not been for

her "come on" style of dress, the prowling and the attacking might never have been attempted.

Mothers surely carry some responsibility as to how their teen-age daughters dress. Mothers more than the girls should realize the danger of semi-nudity in a world where there is so little religion and so little sense of decency. If mothers cannot buy modest formal dresses for their daughters' parties, let them band together and protest long and loud. The demands of an army of women would undoubtedly have more effect than the demands of an army of marines. Teen-agers themselves can do much in this regard, as has been made clear by the SDS, a society started by Catholic youth groups themselves to demand that dealers supply them with decent dresses.

And now, a word, a last word about the adornment that a teen-age girl should permit herself. By adornment is meant the paint, the powder and the other lotions, salves and mysterious ointments that women use to add luster to that which is already more lustrous than the stars.

To be truthful, most teen-age girls do not need too much of these revivificants. Their skin as yet has not become tired or their complexion faded or their lips lifeless. A famous painter was once asked what in his opinion was the most beautiful thing in the world. He did not say that he thought the most beautiful thing in the world was a chain of mountains or a thundering sea. He said that he thought the most beautiful thing in the world was a teen-age girl.

If the statement of the celebrated artist be true, the majority of teen-age girls need very little paint and powder for the sharpening of the weapons they already possess. It is not a sin, of

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course, if they use these strange things, that is, if their parents permit their use. But it is unnecessary. It is like tinting the rainbow or deepening the colors of the rose. Artificial restoratives of beauty are for those whose beauty is beginning to wane or has already waned. It will be quite some years be-

fore the teen-age girls of today will become members of that sorority. When they do, they can use all the paint and powder that they want. Until then, they should let nature have her say. One can't very well improve on a diamond.

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## **Pre-Marriage Clinic**

### **Age-Difference in Marriage**

*Donald F. Miller*

**Problem:** I am twenty-five years old and have been keeping company with a man of thirty-three. We have reached the point where he wants to marry me, and I feel that I love him enough to be very happy with him. But my parents are shocked at the idea of my marrying a man eight years older than myself. They say that this age-difference is entirely too great for a successful and happy marriage. The man is a Catholic like myself; never married, and we agree on all the important things pertaining to marriage. I have two questions: 1. Is such a difference in age a real obstacle to happiness in marriage? 2. Must I obey my parents by not marrying this man because they object to him?

**Solution:** Your parents are obviously not very experienced, nor very observant, concerning marriage of persons with some difference of age. There are thousands of happy and successful marriages in which the husband is anywhere from five to ten or fifteen years older than the wife. There are some such in which the difference of age is even greater. Sure, the ideal thing is for husband and wife to be within a few years of the same age. But the ideal is not always practical, nor does the factor of age always have the most important bearing on the happiness of a marriage. Other things are far more important, e.g., solid character, agreement on religion, mutual acceptance of the burdens and sacrifices that marriage involves. I should say that eight years' difference in age, especially when the man is the older, may well be ignored when all the other elements that make for a happy marriage are present.

Must you obey your parents and give up this man? Absolutely speaking, no, because you are of an age to decide your own vocation. However, it would not be wise and prudent to make a sharp break with your parents without a determined effort to overcome their objections. One way of doing this would be to have a good talk with your pastor, laying the whole case before him, and to ask him to guide you in your own attitude toward your parents, and perhaps even to speak to them for you if he decided that there is no good reason for advising against your marriage. If your parents remain obdurate to the last, your pastor can best help you make the decision as to whether you should marry in spite of their objections.



# readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

Clinton, Iowa

"I feel it my responsibility to write and tell you that I am no longer a Catholic and for that reason have not renewed my subscription to *THE LIGUORIAN*. Not that I did not enjoy reading the magazine; I did enjoy it very much when I was a Catholic. But now I do not agree with many of your Catholic teachings about doctrines and laws and therefore I have no desire for your magazine. I read the Catholic Bible and studied it, and I found out that the Catholic Church is wrong. For one reason Ephesians, 4:5, says: 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism.' The Catholic Church has two baptisms. I addressed you as 'Mr.' because Matthew 23:9 tells us to call no man father upon this earth. If you would like more Scriptures that converted me, kindly write and I shall give them to you.

Mrs. R. J."

*We have the full Scriptures before us on our desk, and each time we read any part of it, it makes us more firmly a Catholic. We have not yet heard about the "two baptisms" in the Catholic Church. If our correspondent knew the background of Our Lord's prohibition against "calling any man father on this earth," she would not have concluded that a child must not call his male parent his father, nor a spiritual child his spiritual progenitor a father in God.*

The editors

Chicago, Ill.

"Please cancel my subscription. We do not approve of mixed marriages, be they black and white, yellow and white, or black and yellow. We have seen the sufferings of children born of such marriages and therefore will not subscribe to any magazine or paper like yours that approves of them.

K.K."

*We have seen children of many all-white marriages suffering terrible things too. We do not make an argument out of that against all-white marriages. Throughout history there have been and in many parts of the world today there are racially mixed marriages in which the children are as happy as any others. Bad parents can hurt their children, whether they be of the same race or different races; and the prejudices of a decadent society can hurt children too.*

The editors

Avon, Ohio

"Your article on bearing physical suffering for the love of Jesus Christ was very enlightening, but it did not say anything about mental suffering. Due to selfishness, pride and ignorance of religion, my marriage of fifteen years, with two children, ended in divorce. When the final blowup came, I agreed on letting my wife have it and left. We lived in California, and I returned to Ohio. After time for reflection I saw how foolish this was, and begged

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for a reconciliation. She would have none of it. I have not given up hope, but in the meantime the mental anguish of being parted from my family sometimes becomes unbearable. I'm sure it's as bad as my physical suffering. If I could be made to believe that this too is the will of God, it would be much easier to bear. Could you clear this up?

J.D.C."

*Here the suffering individual should above all see the will of God because his suffering is the penalty for the pride and selfishness that were the cause of his misery. Many suffer physically without having offended God greatly; in such cases great faith in God's will and providence must be clung to. But when we have brought misery on ourselves by our sins, then we can and must submit to God's will as the means of our purification, and bear the deserved cross patiently.*

The editors

Pittsburgh, Pa.

"A friend of mine gave me some copies of THE LIGUORIAN, and believe me, they have done a lot for me. Reading them has started me on the way back to confession, where I haven't been for ages because I was practicing birth-control. I really thought it was nothing until I read the article, 'How to Go to Hell with Dignity.' I'm saving that article so that I can always have it, and can show it to people who don't go to confession.

Anon."

*The article, "How to Go to Hell with Dignity," may be had in ten-cent pamphlet form.*

The editors

Paramus, N. J.

"As regards children in church, if the Blessed Mother were to arrive at your church with the Christ-child in her arms, where would the ushers put her? It seems

more consistent with the teachings of Christ to put those who are annoyed under glass, rather than little children whose souls are as yet uncontaminated with the niceties called respectability and dignity but which are only a sham. Such hypocrisy is more insulting to God than the good honest howl of an innocent child.

J. B. C."

*The many who have written to us in favor of having babies in church are a tribute to the genuine spiritual outlook and selfless charity to be found among Catholics. But the weaker members of the mystical body of Christ, i.e., those easily disturbed by crying babies, must also be considered in the discussion. Charity must embrace them too.*

The editors

Wilmette, Ill.

"I am a new subscriber to THE LIGUORIAN and I just read the article, 'What Every Priest Must Know.' This is very impressive, but nowhere in the article did I note any mention of the art of public speaking. It may be the intention of the hierarchy to make people suffer and do penance through poor-speaking, monotonous-voiced, unanimated, uninspired priests giving unorganized and unprepared sermons. My wife is not a Catholic but she goes to Mass with me at times, and invariably she is bored with the sermons. She has been spoiled by Bishop Sheen, whom she has followed for years. What a pity other priests cannot be as effective as they could if they worked at it. I note the squabbles in Readers Retort. Most of them seem elementary and inconsequential, as in your weak answer to D.J.B., of Jackson, Missouri, on the subject of birth-prevention. And why dwell on such subjects as work on Sunday when there are so many deeper and more fundamental issues to be discussed? Reading this over, I doubt if you will publish it as it points out the glaring weaknesses of the clergy. I

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am only pointing out what a lot of Catholics talk about anyway. So print it if you dare, which will be a real test of what you can or cannot do.

A.J.H."

*We join this correspondent in deploring the poor sermons lay people often have to listen to, our own included. We are sure that all priests would like to be more effective speakers, but both human frailty (despite some training in the seminary) and a multitude of other duties explain without justifying our poor sermons. THE LIGUORIAN is a journal of moral and spiritual instruction, and does not apologize for treating of subjects like forbidden work on Sunday, birth-prevention, social justice, etc. All Christian duties are in the range of our interest, weak though our presentation at times may be.*

The editors

Janesville, Wisc.

"It would seem that a few extremely sensitive persons were shocked by the 'vulgarity' of the article, 'Better Off Dead.' One wonders if these same individuals are equally sensitive in regard to their obligation to 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' so wonderfully exemplified by this courageous missionary. The only explanation we can give for their attitude is that they have lost touch with reality. They are unable or unwilling to realize that there are millions of souls in this world whose lives are nothing but a pitiful struggle for a wretched existence. Too much soft living has dulled their feelings of sympathy or compassion for others. They have let themselves become 'cozy Catholics.' After Mass on Sunday, they retreat into their shell and don't emerge from it until Mass time the next Sunday. They are very much disgusted by any sermons on money, hell, birth-control or any other subject that in any way disturbs their complacency. They are very fond of sermons on the Mystical Body and

similar subjects, which make them feel as if they already have one foot in heaven and are far above any base thoughts about life here on earth. How much better to deny ourselves a little and send some financial assistance to our foreign missionaries, and thereby share in their work, rather than sit back amid our luxury and criticize them for their meager results. Their measure of success is directly dependent upon the backing they receive from us. Let's not hold them back; if we can't give money, then we can at least give them the benefit of our prayers. From my experience in the South Pacific in 1944, may I assure these complaining readers that the article, 'Better Off Dead,' far from being overdone, gave only a small hint of the appalling conditions to be found in such places.

G.E.W., Jr."

St. Louis, Mo.

"In our seminary files are the names of 3500 missionaries who are begging for Catholic literature, especially periodicals and magazines. These will be used to help stem the tide of secular and communistic propaganda once they are in the hands of the missionaries. This is an ideal apostolate for those individuals or groups who are not able to spare much time and money. Here is all you do. Print your name and address on a postcard and address it to:

KENRICK REMAILING SERVICE  
KENRICK SEMINARY  
ST. LOUIS 19, MISSOURI

We will then send you the name and address of a missionary together with instructions for mailing your literature to him. This will be your apostolate — you will mail this literature personally to a missionary who desperately needs it. Won't you please help us to spread God's truth in this easy but effective way?

J.J.S.

KENRICK REMAILING SERVICE"



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Rochester, N.Y.

"You invited opinions about crying rooms. I am a hundred per cent in favor of them. Last Easter I attended Mass at a parish other than my own. About ten minutes before Mass a young couple came into church with three small children, the oldest not over four. They took a seat right under the pulpit. Almost immediately the children began to be restless, making plenty of noise. This went on until the priest got up and started to preach on the resurrection. The mother and father tried in vain to quiet the children, but after some minutes got up and took them out. Only then could the rest of us settle back and hear the rest of the sermon. The church that I attend doesn't have a crying room, but some of the Sodality girls volunteer to watch the children in a school room during Mass hours. Thus both father and mother can attend Mass together. Let parents take their children to church during the week, when there is nobody to be disturbed. Catholic adults are bound to hear Mass under pain of mortal sin on Sundays. Let us hear it in peace and with the proper respect.

M.S."

*We do not like to go to the extreme of saying that children should never be brought into church by their parents. Letters in this department have already proved that mothers and fathers can, with some planning and practice, teach their small children to behave perfectly in church. We do agree that children not well-trained to behave in church should not be permitted to disturb the congregation Sunday after Sunday. Baby-sitters in a classroom or elsewhere are one solution.*

The editors

Cincinnati, Ohio

"I am sixteen, a junior in high school. My mother subscribed to your magazine last year, and I think it is wonderful. It has helped me make many seemingly very

difficult decisions this year. At times I thought you were a bit too strict, but I found that when I followed your advice I was the one to profit. Often my friends and I get together and discuss your articles, and are very happy that we have found a source of advice that we are sure is the right one to follow. Keep up your good work and especially your helpful articles for teen-agers. By the way, my girlfriend and I *used* to go steady, but we don't any more.

Miss P. D."

*We are delighted that there are some teen-agers who try out our advice, even when they think it seems a bit too strict, and then find out that it profits them. Much experience with young people stands behind all the advice that is given in THE LIGUORIAN.*

The editors

Eden, N.Y.

"For several years I have read THE LIGUORIAN, but never before have been so aroused to retort as I am by the comments signed 'L.M.' in the November Readers Retort. It is the first time that a few words gave me goose pimples. I have been a Catholic for a mere five years—a very humble and grateful one. I hope—but my faith is so dear to me that I would part with everything before giving any of it up. Believe me, as a Protestant I searched the Scriptures, but the only true explanation is found in the Catholic Church. True faith is obtained only by sanctifying grace, the key that opens the mind and stresses the million aids for our redemption. This grace is obtained only by prayer. How about a few articles to help us converts bring others into the Church? Sometimes I feel as though I were completely gagged. How can anyone describe the sun and moon and stars to one who has never seen them?

W.H."

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Articles such as "Why Many Do Not Become Catholics," (Oct. 1955) and "What You Need for a Merry Christmas," (Dec. 1955) are designed to help converts talk about their faith to others. More such articles will appear regularly in THE LIGUORIAN.

The editors

Detroit, Mich.

"I have read your recent correspondence about birth-control and also your booklet, 'For Wives and Husbands Only.' At the risk of seeming like a rebellious, selfish and even sacrilegious wife (which I surely don't wish to be), may I question something that has always puzzled many of us: your 'approach' to the subject. It seems always to center around the phrase 'wifely duty.' Why, oh why, do you Catholic writers persistently refer to the subject of the sacred marriage relationship in terms of this ghastly admonition? Must it always be duty, submission, something we must undergo? Could it not be elevated to a slightly higher level? Would it be too far off the beam to suggest that just once in a while you urge men to do a little submitting, to grant us a little of the time, finesse, gentle delicacy, reverent concern and self-control that would solve most of the problems of marriage you discuss? Why don't you ever publish a few remarks about human decency directed at husbands, so that they will give their wives at least a few months' breathing space after a child is born by practicing some abstinence? Can't men give up sex for at least four or six months after their wives have a baby? Why are we wives always told it is our duty to submit, and thus maybe have ten children in as many years, when there are so many 'Catholics' cheating and having only two or three children, and when the non-Catholic viewpoint of having children only when you want them seems so much more logical?

Mrs. S.R.K."

The perfect treatment of problems of the married is to blend a statement of moral obligations, duties, admonitions (ghastly though such statements may sometimes seem) with earnest urgings that both husband and wife practice charity, thoughtfulness, consideration toward each other. Most of the problems presented to us are concerned primarily with right and wrong; wives or husbands ask, in such and such circumstances, what does God oblige me to do? We give the answers from the viewpoint that sin is the greatest, indeed the only real, evil in the world, bearing no comparison with having a large family, difficult pregnancies, etc. At the same time we have often urged husbands to be considerate of their wives; we agree with this wife that the ideal thing would be for every husband to practice continence at least for some months after a baby is born. But we cannot say flatly that in every case this must be done, because there are cases in which it would lead to the commission of many mortal sins. The logic of the non-Catholic world, and of Catholics who have adopted its practices of contraception, is the logic of secularism. It leaves just one thing out of its thinking, viz., the fact of eternal heaven and hell.

The editors

St. Louis, Mo.

"Here is my subscription for two more years of the best reading and information available in any one magazine. Don't thank me for my subscription; let me thank you for your wonderful articles.

J.R."

Lansing, Mich.

"It isn't possible for me to express my appreciation for the spiritual knowledge I have acquired from your magazine. Never before did I realize how ignorant I was of God's truths. THE LIGUORIAN gives me more assurance in defending God's Church.

Mrs. T.W.L."

# ... The Transfiguration

No doubt many who have often heard the story of Christ's Transfiguration did not realize how full of meaning and application the event was.

R. J. Miller • • • • •

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**T**HE Transfiguration is an event unique in the life of Jesus Christ. For once, He allowed the glory of His divinity to appear in His human body. He did so in a way that evidently has its own method and order, even though we poor mortals, like sleepy Peter, must grope and guess to find it. Dimly we can see, however, that the "event" of the Transfiguration is in reality a series of events, like scenes in a tremendous drama; and as a drama it has its own strangely assorted cast of characters, as well as a mysterious plot of its own which unfolds in the dramatic series of scenes that constitute the event.

The CAST OF CHARACTERS, if listed in the conventional form, would be:

JESUS CHRIST, the King of Glory.  
PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN, His favorite apostles, in the present appearance sleepy and confused.  
MOSES AND ELIAS, visitors from other worlds.

THE VOICE OF GOD THE FATHER, which speaks from a cloud tenderly but in accents of thunder.

THE SCENES could be listed and summarized as follows:

PROLOGUE. Caesarea Philippi.  
Christ predicts His passion.

SCENE I. Six days later. A mountain in Palestine.

Time, night.

Christ prays, and the apostles go to sleep.

Jesus Christ is transfigured.

SCENE II. The Same.

Enter Moses and Elias. The converse with Christ about His approaching death in Jerusalem. The apostles awaken, are dumb-founded.

Peter utters some confused words.

SCENE III. The same.

A cloud envelopes Christ, and Moses and Elias.

The voice of God the Father speaks from the cloud.

The apostles collapse in terror.

SCENE IV. The same.

Christ rouses the stricken apostles.

They look up, and see only Jesus in His customary form.

EPILOGUE. Near the foot of the mountain.

Christ bids the apostles be silent about the vision "until the Human Being be risen from the dead."

The "Prologue," in which Our Lord predicts His passion has an evident connection with the Transfiguration. The Evangelists link the two events by

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stressing the fact that the Transfiguration took place "six days later." (St. Luke, it is true, makes it "about eight days after these words," but commentators explain the difference on the basis of a difference in counting half days as days or not; besides, St. Luke says "about" eight days.) The Evangelists also quote Our Lord as telling the twelve, immediately after the prediction, that

There are some standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Human Being and the Kingdom of God coming in power;

which the commentators say was a reference to Peter, James, and John, and to the Transfiguration.

Besides, Moses and Elias, in conversing with Christ in glory, were speaking (according to St. Luke)

about His dying  
that He was going to do in Jerusalem.

And after the Transfiguration, Christ Himself made at least an indirect connection between the two events when He told Peter, James, and John:

Tell no man what you have seen  
until the Human Being be risen from the dead.

Thus the Transfiguration is something presented by Christ to offset the humiliation of His passion; something to remember in the dark hours of His way of the cross; a light for faith, and a glorious promise for hope in the hearts of His followers.

Scene One opens the drama proper of the Transfiguration. Jesus Christ is discovered there in the act of praying, as He usually did before the great acts of His life. And Peter, James, and

John are sleeping, as they also did on another important occasion when their Lord showed them special favor, namely at the agony in the garden.

The contrast is striking in the extreme. On this one occasion Jesus Christ reveals Himself in heavenly glory, and His chosen apostles celebrate the occasion by being sunk in slumber.

There would even seem to be a kind of divine irony in the situation. Heaven reveals its wonders; the Desired of the Nations appears in the splendors of divinity; and earth is sound asleep. It is the irony of St. John's Gospel:

He came unto His own;  
and His own received Him not.

In a deeper sense, Christ is making sport here of worldly love of glamor. Satan had once offered Him worldly glamor as a bribe; "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory" (or the *glamor*) "of them" had been shown to Christ as one of the three temptations before His public life. The Transfiguration is Christ's answer to satan's bribe. The world will be His; "I have conquered the world," He will tell the apostles at the Last Supper; but not in the worldly way of glamor and display;

The foolish things of the world hath  
God chosen,  
that He might confound the wise;  
and the weak things of the world hath  
God chosen,  
that He might confound the strong.  
And the base things of the world,  
and the things that are contemptible,  
hath God chosen,  
and the things that are not,  
that He might bring to naught the things  
that are:  
*that no flesh should glory in His sight*

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As to the Transfiguration itself, while it was an extraordinary exception in Christ's life, in one way it was no miracle at all. It was rather a case of nature's taking its course. Divine nature for once was appearing in its true guise, and doing what was proper for it to do: being dominant, all-pervading, all-enlivening the sacred Body it had taken to itself.

In that sense, the miracle was rather the other way round. That even the Body of Christ Itself should be able to smother, so to speak, and conceal the blazing glories of the divinity, that was the real mystery and miracle. That God in human form should appear so little like God as to allow His enemies to blaspheme in His presence, to lay their sacrilegious hands upon Him, and spit in His sacred face — that is the incomprehensible mystery of divine restraint.

Still, in another way, the Transfiguration may indeed be considered a miracle. St. Thomas Aquinas actually does call it one. He explains that the *rule* for Christ's life was that the glory of the divinity be hidden. Hence the Transfiguration was an *exception* to the rule established by God and in that sense was a miracle. In heaven, however, (St. Thomas goes on), for Christ's body, or for the body of any saint, to enjoy this glory of transfiguration, is no miracle.

Thus the Transfiguration was a kind of foretaste of heaven for Christ's body, and a demonstration of what the bodies of all the saints will be like in heaven after the resurrection.

This splendor of glory in the bodies of the saints in heaven has had a name of its own for centuries, given it by holy writers. It is called one of the "dowries" of the risen body. The name "dowry" was derived from the ancient practice of giving to the daughter of

the family when she married a special portion of wealth; a portion not otherwise hers, but which was designed to make her somehow worthy of her husband. In a similar way the risen body was thought of as a bride, the bride of the glorious soul; and to make the body somehow worthy of the glory of the soul, it is given special gifts of glory by God its Father, which are called "the dowries" of the risen body.

Nor is this a mere pious fancy. There is a solid basis for the doctrine of the dowries, namely the fact that the body of Jesus Christ actually possessed them, and His resurrection is the cause and the *pattern* for the resurrection of the bodies of all the just. St. John says in his first Epistle:

Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God;

and it has not yet appeared what we shall be.

We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him,

because we shall see Him as He is.

And Our Lord Himself said:

Then shall the just shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

As a matter of fact, there are more than just one of these dowries. Earthly brides have only one; but the brides of God, the just present in heaven with body and soul, are going to have *four*.

The four dowries have each its own technical name, given it by the experts. Our divine Lord showed that He possessed each of them even during His life here on earth. And the modern world has produced a character in popular literature and on television which can be utilized as an illustration of what the dowries will mean for each glorious body in the world to come.

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The four names are: 1) glory; 2) subtility; 3) impassibility; and 4) agility.

"Glory" is the one we have been considering as exemplified in the Transfiguration.

"Subtility" means the power to appear and disappear at will; to pass through walls or doors or solid bodies; to have perfect control of every member of the body so as to be a perfect artist, singer, athlete, or whatever we will; in short, perfect control of mind over matter.

"Impassibility" means the power to resist or throw off or escape any danger whatsoever threatening the life or well-being of the body.

"Agility" is the ability to transport the body with the speed of thought to any distance whatsoever.

Our Lord showed that He possessed the dowry of "glory" during His Transfiguration. We have been speaking of this particular dowry throughout the present article, and need say no more about it now.

The next dowry, "subtility," was one that Jesus made use of on the very first Christmas night. He came forth from His Mother's womb into the world, and left her a virgin. "The doors being shut," He was to come much later into the midst of His disciples on the first Easter night; and holy writers make use of the same phrase to describe what He did on the first Christmas night: He came into our midst, the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, "the doors being shut" of His immaculate Mother's virginity. One moment Our Blessed Lady was kneeling in the cave of Bethlehem, with her Child in her chaste womb beneath her heart; the next, He has come into the world, she holds Him in her arms; and she is still the Virgin of Virgins.

After His resurrection Our Lord made use of the dowry of subtility several times. There was His coming into the Upper Room on the first Easter evening, and also on the following Sunday (when the doubting Thomas was present). There were also the cases of His appearing and disappearing, or appearing without being recognized: to St. Mary Magdalene on Easter Sunday morning; to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Easter afternoon; and to Peter and John with several other disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

Impassibility, the next dowry, was employed by Christ during His life to escape or confound His enemies. In Nazareth one Sabbath His fellow-townsmen had turned against Him, and were furiously rushing Him out of town to a cliff where they meant to hurl Him to His death; but all of a sudden, Jesus was not there. So too in Jerusalem one day the Scribes and Pharisees "took up stones to cast at Him," but of a sudden again, Jesus had escaped from their midst. And most striking of all, when the soldiers came to arrest Him in the Garden of Olives, and called out that they were looking for "Jesus of Nazareth," He replied:

I am He.

And on the instant, as though there had been a fiery explosion at their very feet, they hurled themselves to the ground as if to escape the threat of sudden death. Only there had been no explosion, no fire, no threat of death: a Man had answered to His name, that was all.

After His resurrection, Our Lord seems to have made use of the dowry of impassibility when St. Thomas the Apostle was making his test of the



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reality of His wounds. Had they been ordinary wounds, such rough handling would have caused intolerable pain. As it was, the dowry of impassibility was a shield against the slightest pain or infection.

The last of the four dowries is that of agility. It is seen in Our Lord's walking upon the water during His life. And it was by that dowry that at the end of all His earthly career He ascended into heaven.

It might be mentioned here that an objection has been raised against Christ's ascension into heaven in the name of science; and the groundlessness of the objection consists in an ignorance of the nature of the dowry of agility.

According to the Bible account (thus runs the objection) Christ ascended into heaven at a rather leisurely pace. But the distances in the universe are so vast that it would take millions and millions of years to traverse them at so leisurely a pace; and if heaven is beyond the material universe, Christ is still on His way, and will not reach heaven for countless millions of years!

A little careful reading of the Bible story of the ascension, however, plus a little understanding of the dowry of agility, make quick work of this objection. The Bible states expressly that after Our Lord's body had reached a certain point in the sky, and the disciples were still watching Him rise

a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Once behind the cloud, we may be sure that the progress of Our Lord's ascension into heaven no longer followed "so leisurely a pace." Instead, the dowry of agility came into play with full force. For that dowry is a power not merely to raise the body from the earth, but to transport it with

the speed of thought to the confines of the material universe and the very gates of heaven.

It was mentioned above that there is a character on television in the modern world which can serve as a kind of popular illustration of the dowries of the glorified bodies in heaven. Ordinarily, this character is an everyday man. But when he embarks on one of his wonderful adventures, he changes his appearance to begin with; then, as occasion demands, he is able to propel himself right through a solid wall (although he does a rather crude job of this, for he usually leaves a large heap of bricks or masonry behind); then, when the villains shoot the death-ray at him, he simply puts out his big chest, and the bullets bounce off harmlessly; and he flies through the air with the greatest of ease.

As the reader may have surmised, the name of this wonderful fellow is Superman. His feats are the admiration of children, young and old. And it may be that one of the reasons for the admiration is that somehow or other we feel deep down a kind of kinship with his extra-ordinary abilities; a kinship which is related to our own destiny to possess those very same gifts in our glorified bodies after the resurrection.

For these four qualities which make Superman wonderful are surely going to be ours, and in a far higher way than they are attributed to Superman.

Superman changes his appearance; but it is nothing like the glory that will transfigure our risen bodies. Superman rifles through a solid wall; but we shall be able to glide right through the vast globe of the earth or even the sun, as we travel on pleasure or business visiting friends or acquaintances from one end of the universe to the other. Superman is impervious to blows of bullets while in his wonderful state; but we

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shall be strangers to pain, decay, death forever. Superman flies through the air, but at a comparatively moderate rate of speed; we shall be able to travel with the speed of thought.

We are grateful to Superman and his inventor and producers for the reminder they give us of things to come.

Superman himself may be a creature of imagination; but the things he reminds us of are glorious realities. They were and are realities in the glorified body of Jesus Christ; and they will be ours:

If we suffer with Him,  
we shall also reign with Him!

### Last Favor

A picture of the Sacred Heart caused a murderer in far-off Africa to have a change of heart before he paid the death penalty.

He was one of three condemned to hang. Rev. Albert Kretschmer, a Divine Word missionary in Accra, Gold Coast, Africa, came to give them spiritual consolation, but this particular man refused even to talk to the priest.

Shortly before the criminal's death, the missionary returned with a picture of the Sacred Heart, one of a million that had been sent out by the National Director of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart for distribution all over the world.

Father Kretschmer wrote:

"I explained the picture to him, especially the words printed on the back, 'Jesus loves you.' I was soon able to baptize him conditionally. His last words were: 'Jesus, I love you.'"

### For One Who Was Lost

A party of laymen and a priest from a north-country parish in England were returning by car from a Catholic Young Men's Society rally in a town some fifty miles away. After passing through Manchester, the driver suddenly announced that he was on the wrong road. He knew the way so well it seemed incredible, but they had to return to Manchester and start over

again. Fifteen miles or so later, the driver again had to confess to a wrong turning and back they went to Manchester once more.

Night was well advanced as the party started on their third attempt. Soon they came upon a smashed motorbike and the figure of a man lying prone on the grass at the side of the road. There probably wasn't another Catholic priest within twenty miles of that deserted country spot at that time of night. Most of the party understood why their driver had lost his way, for the injured man was a Catholic and was able to make his peace with God before he died.

### Ready To Die

A chaplain relates that during a desperate battle on Guadalcanal, a soldier threw himself on a Japanese grenade which landed among three members of an American mortar crew. The soldier survived the explosion but was horribly wounded.

The chaplain visited the lad in an army hospital and asked him:

"Why did you take that hundred to one chance?"

The soldier smiled:

"It was like this, Father," he replied, "I was ready to die because I had just gone to confession. But I didn't know whether the other fellows were ready or not."

Father Lovasik

# For Shepherds in the Mist

Some time ago a priest who had wandered from the right path wrote a plea in behalf of all whom he called "Shepherds in the mist." Perhaps the best answer to that plea is to be found in *Via Coeli*.

*Michael H. Pathe*

ONE of the outstanding characteristics of a practical Catholic faith is devotion to the holy priesthood. This devotion shows itself in many ways. It is evidenced in a sacred regard for the priesthood as a Divine institution. It reveals itself in the respect given to the person of the priest, and in fervent prayer for all priests. Or it may show itself in the cooperation given a priest in the fulfillment of his duties as pastor of souls.

Because of the functions in which a priest is constantly engaged, his daily Mass, the administration of the sacraments, the recitation of the Divine office, his mind and its thoughts, his heart and its affections, his soul and its aspirations must of necessity be freed from worldliness and united intimately with God. He is God's ambassador on earth. He deals with humanity in the things that pertain to God. He is the representative of God in the world of human souls. The care of bodies, the affairs of state, the conduct of politics, the material interests of nations, belong to those who exercise earthly power.

The priest's God-given power is exclusively and entirely in the spiritual sphere. His only concern with mundane affairs is that they do not interfere with the laws of God that govern souls. The temporal power and the spiritual power need not oppose each other. There is peace on earth when each respects the rights of the other.

A priest must be holy if he wishes to fulfill the duties of his high office. Sanctity is the only accepted credential

of his ambassadorship. His conduct must be beyond reproach. The people for whom he deals with God have a right to expect that he be a worthy representative of their cause and a friend in the high court in which he pleads that cause. To live in the world and not be a part of it, to touch the earth and not be soiled by it, to be intimately associated with people and not be distracted from his spiritual purposes, to use the material things that life affords and not be enslaved by them, is a task that can be done only by one who keeps his soul in the hands of God. Only one who lives by prayer and is well schooled in the science of self-denial can carry this responsibility with credit to himself and to his Church and to his God.

Yet priests, for all that, are only human beings. Their priesthood indeed is Divine but they who carry it are but vessels of clay. They are exposed to all the tribulations and temptations that torture flesh and blood. They were never exempted from the weaknesses that "flesh is heir to." The trees that are planted on high places are more affected by storms than those that grow in sheltered valleys. The materialism of the world can creep into the sanctuary. The song of the world's votaries, "Let us eat, drink and be merry," can sometimes outshout a prayer. The paganism of our age and its philosophy of self-indulgence can inject its insidious poison even into the heart of a priest. And the Devil, the arch-enemy of every priest, is forever plotting the downfall of God's anointed.

So it happens at times that Chris-

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tian people have to stand the shock of a priest's defection. Whatever the cause may be, the effect of this fall is always tragic, and all the more so because not one soul but many are affected by it. Scandal is given, religion suffers, good people are hurt, wicked people find justification for their wrong-doing, and the scoffer gloats over the ruin.

Prayer and penance can remedy these evils. Christlike charity could bring the offender back to God, as it brought the Magdalen to the foot of the cross. But, alas, in so many cases the poison has gone too far into the priest's heart, and he finds himself numbed by its power.

Perhaps the cause was alcohol, and its diabolical insistence that more and yet more of the intoxicant can somehow right the wrong. The chains forge themselves ever tighter on his soul. His intellect is darkened. His will is enslaved. And at last he is bound in pitiful helplessness.

The man who once exercised the power of freeing souls from sin has now become a slave to sin. The faithful ask, "Cannot anything be done for him?" His friends are broken-hearted in their inability to help him. The devout pray that God may send some messenger of mercy to lift him out of his misery. The case seems hopeless.

Yet all is not lost. Hope still shines out through the darkness of despair. God has heard the pleading and the messenger of mercy is near at hand.

Out in the heart of the Jemez Mountains in New Mexico there is a monastery called *Via Coeli*. It is well named, "the way back to heaven." Here a new congregation of priests is assembled under the title of Servants of the Paraclete. They are devout men, men of extraordinary zeal and charity, dedicated men. The purpose of their

establishment and the object of all their labors and prayers is to help the poor "shepherds in the mist" to find the road that will lead them back again to the peace of mind and happiness of heart they once experienced, to bring them back to the dream that once inspired their youth, to restore them to the dignity of which they were once so proud. These Servants of the Paraclete consecrate their lives to the restoration of their fallen brother-priests.

A banker can become a mechanic and make a success of his trade. A lawyer can become a butcher, a baker or a candlestick-maker, and fashion a good living for himself. But a priest is a priest forever. No matter what other avocation he takes up, the consciousness will never leave him that he has sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. The indelible marks of his priesthood cannot be blotted out with the dust of earth, nor can his character be painted over with gold. As long as one spark of faith smoulders in his soul he wants to be only what God made him, a priest forever.

It is only in such a place as *Via Coeli* that he will find the road signs that will point the way to the fulfillment of that want. Here prayer resumes its proper place in his life. Here he meets with understanding and sympathy. Here he finds the charity that will warm his chilled heart. Here he has the good example that will be a safe light to his tottering feet.

Already in its infant years, *Via Coeli* can thank God for a success that His miraculous grace alone can achieve. And all Catholics and good Christians throughout the land can thank and bless the Servants of the Paraclete for the beacon light of hope to wandering priests they have raised on the monastery of *Via Coeli* in the Jemez Mountains in New Mexico.

# Happenings in Rome

Monthly round-up of significant events in the capital of Christendom.

*Christopher McEnmiry*

## *For Shepherds:*

The sheep-herder to the sheep-herders. Never was the white-robed pastor of the Vatican more at home than when he received the pastors of Sardinia and the Abruzzi, dressed in skins and carrying their pipes and horns and cymbals. Under his fatherly direction, these pastors, 35,000 fathers of families, had been formed into a "Pious Union" to promote their spiritual, economic and cultural interests. They, in the person of their representatives, had come to thank him. Beside the Pope stood our own Monsignor Landi, whom American generosity had enabled to do so much for these sheep-herders through the "War Relief Services."

"You pastors," he said, "have come to render due homage to the Divine Pastor who has committed to Us the care of His flock. You know that the story of salvation narrated in the Holy Scriptures utilizes the image of the pastor and his flock as the most frequent, the most familiar and the most significant picture of the way in which God acts towards men to carry out His loving plan. Again and again the Bible declares that the Lord protects His people as the pastor guards his flock, cares for them with solicitude, defends them from their enemies, leads them to lush pastures beside refreshing waters. And when He sees false shepherds, feeding themselves at the cost of the flock, He declares that He will come Himself to gather the scattered sheep, cherish them and lead them to a sheepfold of abundance and peace.

And see Low He begins to fulfill His promise: when He comes into the world a helpless Babe, the first He calls to Himself are the pastors of Bethlehem. Their gifts He accepts before all others — lambs perhaps, fitting presents for Him who will be called the Lamb of God. Among all the examples with which Jesus strove to make the people grasp who He really was, the most touching perhaps is that of the Good Shepherd who knows each one of his sheep as they know him. He calls them by name, and they follow him promptly and fearlessly, well aware that he will lead them to safety and defend them even at the cost of his life.

"You see, beloved sons, how well the Lord understood your life and your work and how He loved the virtues that distinguish the true pastor: dedication to duty, simplicity, detachment from vain pleasures that leave behind nothing but bitterness and delusion. You enjoy, 'tis true, few modern luxuries or comforts, and some of you, especially in the mountain regions, suffer dire hardships and painful privations. You know that serious and efficacious efforts are being made to better your lot.

"We should wish here to recall to your minds the serene and satisfying side of your situation. You have at your command solid and precious advantages. Instead of spending your days amid the rush and roar of the city in wearing and monotonous industrial activity, you are gladdened by the magnificent picture which the God of na-

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ture unfolds before your eyes with the changing seasons, and you enjoy the silence and solitude so conducive to prayer and meditation. Naturally you will remember the beautiful stories of the Gospel as you perform your daily duties in the care of your flocks. You think of the Divine Pastor who in the same way has care of you. 'I have come,' He says, 'that they may have life and have it more abundantly.' But the Lord not only occupies Himself with you with infinite affection, He wants you to co-operate with Him. He wants you to do what in you lies to bring all men to His love — all, including the sinners, the strayed, the impious, of every nation and race, that one day there may be but one flock and one Shepherd . . ."

### *For Medical Men:*

"The Latin Medical Union" extends to thirty different countries of Latin culture. When the "Union" met in Rome for an international congress they asked and obtained an audience with the Pope. Since the Holy Father simply will not spare himself whenever his efforts have a chance of doing good, he gave them the address they were hoping for.

At the very beginning of his talk he proposed the very difficulty that comes to the minds of many at mention of a *Latin* organization for the furtherance of medical science.

Some will contend, he said, that your Medical Union for peoples of Latin culture is unrealistic. What has "culture" to do with making people well? The sick are sick, no matter what their linguistic derivation. Pneumonia is pneumonia in lands of Latin culture as well as in lands of Anglo-American culture. Penicillin is penicillin in all places, and anti-tuberculosis injections

seem to act about the same everywhere. The principle surgical interventions, the cases in which they should be resorted to, the techniques to be followed, are similar in all civilized countries. This uniformity rests upon the fact that man is, in all places and amid all cultures, essentially the same in the structure of his organism, in his susceptibility to disease, in his reaction to medication and surgery.

Nevertheless close collaboration among medical men of Latin culture can bring them some benefits over and above what they derive from collaboration with medical men of all cultures.

The true physician seeks to perfect, not only his science and his technique, he seeks to perfect himself. He has not only the "know-how" and the skill, he has his individuality. The more it is enriched by all that is best in his culture, the more precious are his ministrations to his suffering fellow-man. The true physician holds to the broad code of medical morality, rejecting uncompromisingly all that violates it and excluding from his professional associations all who break it. Communication among men of those high principles cannot fail to give them something even more precious than medical knowledge.

The Pope then cites with approval the Code of the Latin Medical Union: "Treat and cure the patient to the best of your knowledge and capacity. Never harm or kill. Always see and esteem the 'man' in the patient. Recognize and respect the limits of medical science. Be prompt to help where your help is needed—and especially prompt where help is most sorely needed. Never be a slave of your sympathies or your antipathies in regard to the condition of the patient, or his social standing, his race or his nationality.



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When he needs your assistance never ask whether he is friend or enemy. When the occasion demands be ready to give your personal services even at the cost of great self-sacrifice."

At the close of his discourse the Pope said he could not neglect to call attention to the fact that the countries grouped in the Latin Medical Union were among those whose soul had been formed and fashioned through long generations in the Catholic faith. And it continues to influence in great part their attitude toward life, and in a particular way toward suffering. On these solid principles of faith the physician should take his stand in regard to his patient as well as in regard to himself. According to Christian tradition the patient deserves the greatest consideration because he is made to the image and likeness of God — a God who took a human body and in that body knew human suffering. The slightest service of the physician is rendered, not merely to a weak and feeble man, but to the Lord of the universe Who will repay with an eternal recompense what is done to the least of His brethren.

### *Faith and Folklore:*

Folklore! What is it? The dictionary says it is traditional customs, beliefs, tales, legends, sayings, games, dances, dress, or anything preserved unreflectively among a people, a country, a neighborhood; hence the science which investigates the life and spirit of a people as revealed by such lore.

Europe, in recent years, has manifested a deep interest in folklore. Other countries have found no word in their own language to express adequately the full meaning of the word, hence they have taken over bodily the old Anglo-Saxon word, folklore, without making any effort to translate it.

The international folklore society held a meeting at Nice after which the delegates journeyed on to Rome and enjoyed an audience with the Pope. Pius XII, who seems to know everything about every science, welcomed them and gave them a deeply understanding and elevating discourse on the subject.

He voiced his regrets that the hectic industrialism of today as well as the harsh and heartless edicts of men in power have uprooted so many people from their ancestral homes and acres and transported them to alien surroundings where all their finest traditions are lost, that the simple, happy merry-making, adapted to each one's character and customs, have been abandoned and that they must now have artificial, commercialized diversion like the pagan Romans in the decadent days of the Empire. "*Panes et circenses* — food, drink and paid entertainers."

### *Statisticians:*

The International Institute of Statisticians held its twenty-eighth Congress in Rome. The President, Rice of the USA, the Vice-Presidents, Geary of Ireland, Mahalanobis of India, Rueff of France, Teixeira of Brazil, the Secretary General, Idenburg of Holland, the Treasurer, Allen of England, and representatives of 21 nations called on the Pope at Castel Gandolfo.

He congratulated them on the fact that theirs is one of the oldest international organizations in the world. Evidently the Pope does not think that an international congress consists merely of a long, pleasant voyage, a whirlwind tour and a good time, with the attached penalty of listening sleepily to dry papers and voting "Aye" to a flock of "BE-It-Resolved's."



## *Sideglances*

*By the Bystander*

We have often been asked what the Catholic answer is to the claim of miracles that is made by many Pentecostal preachers these days. By radio and television religious ceremonies are brought to the attention of millions, in which the preacher calls forth the sick and ailing from the crowd before him, lays his hands upon them and prays over them, and then sends them away apparently cured. The questions that arise are these: Are these real miracles? If not, how are they explained? Is it true, as some preachers say, that Jesus will cure all human diseases, if only they who suffer from them have sufficient faith in Him?

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The Catholic definition of a miracle of healing is an instantaneous recovery from an organic disease or lesion or fracture that would be absolutely impossible according to the known laws of medical science. The Catholic Church believes that such miracles do occur in answer to prayer, but she does not lightly designate any apparent cure of a disease as a miracle. Perhaps the best way to show how careful she is in this regard is to explain what elaborate precautions are taken at the world-famous shrine of Our Lady at Lourdes, to eliminate all possibility of deception. Every claim that a miracle has taken place is subjected to a four-fold examination. The first two, a year apart, are made by the Bureau of Medical Verifications that was set up in 1885. This bureau is made up of hundreds of doctors representing every possible religious viewpoint and faith—Catholics, Protestants, Jews, even professing agnostics and atheists. This

Bureau makes a first examination of the case of a supposed cure as soon as it is reported; if the evidence is in any way doubtful, the case is thrown out at once. If the evidence looks good at first sight, the case is set aside for a year, and then the Bureau examines it again, to see whether the evidence still stands up, whether there has been a relapse of the patient, etc. If a supposed cure survives these two scrutinies, it is sent to the Medical Commission of Lourdes, whose task it is, not to declare the cure a miracle, but to use every scientific technique and all known medical principles to learn whether there might be a natural explanation for the so-called cure. If no natural explanation is found, the case is finally sent to the diocesan authorities in the place where the person lives, with a recommendation that a commission be appointed to make a thorough examination of the person's past medical history, present condition, etc. Thus, if a man went to Lourdes with a fractured leg, and there he found the leg suddenly and completely made whole, it would be at least two years before any Catholic authority would be able to say that this was really a miracle.

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Of all the thousands of cases that have been reported at Lourdes as miraculous, the Catholic Church has officially recognized only 49 as indisputably proved to be miracles. This does not mean that she rules out the possibility of the miraculous in many of the other cases. Indeed, thousands of other cases have been declared by the Bureau of Medical Verifications and the Medical Commission to be unexplainable

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through any natural causes. Why, it may be asked, is the Church so exceedingly cautious in this matter? For two reasons. First, because she has a divine obligation to truth, an obligation that would be violated if she permitted people to be deceived into thinking something a miracle that was not. Second, because lending her authority to unscientific and unproven claims of miracles of healing would easily make people think more of their bodies than of their souls when they went to Lourdes. Indeed, it is a proof of the very truth of the Catholic Church that she is so skeptical about miracles. If she were not the true Church, it is almost certain that, with her many miraculous shrines, she would succumb to the temptation of offering miracles of bodily healing to everybody and forget about the primary task of trying to save their souls.

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How are the so-called miracles of the itinerant Pentecostal preachers to be explained? Certainly this much must be said to begin with: no intelligent person should ever maintain that he has enough evidence to be certain that in any given case a miracle has occurred. The very minimum of such evidence would be a knowledge of the person's past medical and mental history; a knowledge of the person's condition at the time of the alleged miracle; follow-up knowledge of what happened to the person after "the miracle." We know of no case in which Pentecostal "miracle-workers" have ever attempted to present such pertinent facts to the public. We do know, and this is one of the chief reasons for the caution of the Catholic Church in regard to miracles, that much of the illness in the world is due to states of mind or to emotional imbalance; and that such illnesses can be cured by suggestion, by implanting new outlooks, by turning a person's mind away from his troubles to something else. Such cures are not miraculous; they are brought about through natural causes.

It is good that they are brought about, and in that sense it may be said that the preachers do good; but they do wrong by claiming that such cures are "miracles" in the true sense of the word. Furthermore they deceive many who are suffering from actual cancer or heart trouble or tuberculosis into a false hope that is bound to be disappointed.

What about the claim made by a prominent "healer" on television that "Jesus cures all diseases without exception for those who have enough faith in Him?" On the face of it this is a ridiculous statement for the very reason that Jesus Himself said: "It is appointed unto every man one day to die." If He were ready to cure every disease for those who have great faith in Him, then of course these people would never die. Nowhere in the Bible did Christ make any such fantastic promise to His followers that He would cure all their diseases as a reward for their faith in Him. Rather He spoke often about His followers carrying their crosses after Him; about the blessings of mourning and suffering and being persecuted; about the necessity of always being ready for death because we "know not the day nor the hour." Christ did heal many diseased persons during His life on earth, but He did so for very clear reasons: to prove His divinity, to manifest His compassion, to prepare the minds of men to accept His "hard sayings." So too in the Catholic Church there have always been miracles of healing, but they too have had a purpose: to manifest God's presence in His Church, to convince the world of the truth of God's revelation to His Church, to win souls to the love of God. It is not wrong for any Catholic to pray for a miracle of healing for himself or a loved one; but this must be done in simple subjection to God's will and God's designs, among which He never promised to make a disease-less paradise out of this world.



## Catholic Anecdotes

### *Adding Up The Zeros*

It is related that one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece had a pupil who was in love and was enthusiastically telling his master of the young lady's good points.

"She is as beautiful as the morning star," declared the young man. The philosopher wrote down a zero.

"She is as rich as the heiress of Croesus." And again the sage wrote down a zero.

"She has a marvelous mind;" down went another zero; "she is of noble lineage," a zero again; "hers is a very distinguished kinship;" still a zero; "she has a good education;" and a zero still, side by side with all the rest.

The young lover's breath failed him here in amazement at his master's lack of cordial response. But there was still a word to say:

"She is a deeply pious maiden with a character sweetly matching."

And the sage put down a one at the left side of all the zeros. The last trait was the only one that counted, at the same time that it gave value to all the rest.

*El Eco Franciscano*

### *Memorable Interview*

When the late Fulton Oursler was a cub reporter on the *Baltimore American*, he was given an assignment to interview Cardinal Gibbons on an important news item. It was a fine Sunday morning in spring and Mr. Oursler found the Cardinal pacing up and down the cloisters of a church where he was to confirm a class of converts.

He was reading his breviary as he marched past time and time again.

Mr. Oursler cleared his throat; he coughed. All in vain, he was still ignored. He goes on to relate:

"I planted myself in front of him and announced:

"'Cardinal, I am a reporter from the *Baltimore American*.'

"He stopped, looked up at me and gasped:

"'Just think! I might have lived to be a hundred years old and never found that out.'

"And then he laid his hand on my arm and said:

"'What is it you want, my son?'

"He gave me all I asked. I know now that he gave me more than I asked, more than I knew. After that awkward first meeting, when I was a lad of seventeen, suspicious, distrustful and ignorant, I was never able wholly to evade the challenge in his piercing eyes, glowing with the light of another world. I believe that my conversion began that day, in the churchyard of St. Anne."

*Catholic University Bulletin*

### *Memorial:*

In the year 1947 eight mountain guides, perished under an avalanche in the Italian Alps. A chapel in honor of Our Lady of the Dolmites has been built on the spot to perpetuate the memory of these brave men. The erection of the chapel was the work of the "Society for Little Churches in the Mountains."



## *Pointed Paragraphs*

### *For All Who Can Read*

There is a very special virtue that all Catholics should be inspired to practice in a special way during the month of February, when they are bound to be reminded that this is the month dedicated to both the spread and the improvement of what is known as the Catholic Press. The virtue is that of gratitude, and this is how we recommend it to all who read these lines.

#### *1. Be grateful that you can read.*

This reason for gratitude breaks down into two parts. First, be grateful that God gave you all the equipment necessary for reading: your eyes that can scan the printed page; your imagination that can picture what is represented before you in words; your mind that can assay, judge, accept or reject propositions presented to it by your reading. Second, be grateful that you have not been denied the training necessary to make it possible for you to use the equipment God gave you for reading. Be grateful that you have not been numbered among the illiterates of the world.

#### *2. Be grateful that you can choose your reading matter.*

Instinctively your conscience tells you that there is good reading matter and bad; reading matter that helps you morally and spiritually, and reading matter that degrades you. The Catholic Church adds wise directives to your conscience in helping you know what is good reading matter and what is bad. Be grateful that you have essential freedom to choose between the two; that nobody can force you to

read anything that will hurt you; that only a surrender to your fallen human nature and to deliberate sin can induce you to read what is bad for you.

#### *3. Be grateful that there is so much good reading matter from which to choose.*

For your own particular temperament, circumstances, education and needs there is an abundance of reading matter available in books, in magazines, in papers. Look for what you need. Be grateful when you have found it, and express your gratitude to those who have provided it for you.

#### *4. Be grateful that you can inspire others to do the kind of reading they most need.*

All men were created for the happiness of heaven. All are to attain this goal through the merits and the teachings and the commands of Jesus Christ. You cannot know Christ without wanting to make Him known to others. There is no easier way of doing this than by offering them reading matter that makes Him and His teachings and His promises better known.

Such gratitude will lead you to make the most of Catholic Press month.

### *Let's All Take Lent*

On February 15, Lent begins this year.

Three simple phrases explain why every Catholic should fully accept Lent as a time of special prayer and special penance.

The first phrase is "fallen man." We are all "fallen," in the sense that we have inherited the effects of original sin, which make us tend to do the

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things that we know we should not do. Most of us have already in our lifetimes done many of the things that we should not have done, i.e., we have committed sins, and thereby outraged God, misused His gifts, made ourselves deserving of hell. All of us always remain in danger of doing such things as long as we live. Special prayer and penance during Lent atone for past sins, and strengthen us powerfully against future falls.

The second phrase is "the redeeming Christ." With all our sins and weaknesses, Christ loved us and died for us in the midst of great torment, so that the debt of our sins would be paid and we might be elevated into a wonderful kinship with God. The Christ Who suffered for us asked us all to suffer in some way with Him in order to merit what He gained for us. Lent gives us the opportunity to do so.

The third phrase is "a waiting heaven." We have here on earth "no lasting city and no perfect home." We have two choices. We can try to make a paradise out of this world by denying ourselves nothing, by seizing every pleasure that offers itself, and then finding that we only made ourselves more miserable thereby. Or we can accept the fact that our happiness will be found only in heaven, and that we must pay for it now by denying ourselves at least some of the pleasures that dangle before our eyes in this world. Lent gives us the opportunity of purchasing the perfect happiness of heaven by manifesting a carefree detachment from the deceiving promises of happiness in this world.

Say to yourself these three things on Ash Wednesday this year: "I am a fallen man." "I have a Redeemer in Christ." "I must earn my heaven."

Then buckle down to forty days of special prayer and special penance that will make known to all the world what you believe.

### *Valentine Day*

February 14th will once more see thousands of valentines exchange hands as a symbol of an exchange of hearts. Valentine day is the day for the honoring of love.

It is one of the phenomena of our day that modern people who are so preoccupied with love (love songs, love stories, love-making by children not yet out of their teens, etc.) in many instances have so small an understanding of the real meaning of love.

Many people think that it means sex. This is the tone taken by not a few of the love-lorn columnists. This is the conviction of those people who think that marriages should be dissolved when sexual attraction wanes.

Others believe that love is more a matter of receiving than it is of giving. When you are in love, the person with whom you are in love must pay full and undivided attention to you. He must give constantly. You do not have to give. All you need do is receive. This is the point of view of the selfish man and woman, very often of the irreligious man and woman.

Still others labor under the impression that love means romance, kissing, petting in parked cars and all the other vulgar things that so many young people do not hesitate to do in public and who imagine that thereby they are giving an exhibit of true love.

Of course, love means an attraction for the one who is loved. Between a man and a woman a part of this attraction can be physical. But real love is much more than that.

It is an all-embracing attraction, so all-embracing that it takes in the whole



person of the beloved — the mind and the soul and the heart. It would be considered an attraction that was suspect if it could not, for example, take in the mind of the one loved because of a difference of religious conviction.

It is a pure attraction — so pure that it would rather perish than bring harm, physical or spiritual, to the one loved. It is an attraction for a man or a woman that is anchored in the attraction that one has for God. Therefore it can never manifest itself in such a way as to displease God.

It is a self-effacing attraction — so self-effacing that the one is willing, as it says in the Bible, to leave mother and father and all things in order to be in company of the beloved. True love forgets self completely in the interest of the lover. And it continues in this forgetfulness of self right down to the end.

Marriages would last longer and would turn out much happier if they were based on the true notion of love and not on the false notions so current in the world today.

### *The Point About Schweitzer*

The title of this small essay has been borrowed from an editorial which appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature* several months ago. The person referred to is Albert Schweitzer, who in our own day combines genius with humanitarianism. He is considered the world's leading exponent of the music of Bach, but some years ago, he left his fame behind, and went off to found a hospital in French Equatorial Africa. There he has spent the intervening time, by all accounts, humbly caring for the sick and forgetting himself in the service of the forgotten natives there.

All this certainly is very commendable and worthy of high praise. Mr.

Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review*, felt sufficiently carried away to pen the following lines:

"The point about Schweitzer is not whether he brought a gleaming modern hospital to Lambarene. The point about Schweitzer is that he brought the kind of spirit to Africa that the dark man hardly knew existed in the white man. Before Schweitzer white skin meant beatings and gunpoint rule and the imposition of slavery on human flesh. If Schweitzer had done nothing else in his life than to accept the pain of these people as his own, he would have achieved eminence . . ."

We submit that this statement indicates one of two things. Either Mr. Cousins is abysmally ignorant, or he certainly has more than his share of gall. If knowing anything at all about Africa, and the heroic and unselfish efforts of a host of missionaries for several hundred years to better the lot of the natives there, he chose to suppress his information, his statement that Schweitzer was a pioneer in true charity is incredible. We shall go so far as to call it despicable.

Perhaps the first explanation is the most charitable. Mr. Cousins does not know much about what missionaries have done in Africa. He knows nothing of Charles de Foucauld, of the Holy Ghost Fathers, many of whose young men lie buried beneath the hot African sun, martyrs to their own unselfish charity to the sick and the distressed. He does not know of a dozen other missionary orders whose members have lived and worked and died there. "Schweitzer," says Mr. Cousins in effect, "was the first one to bring a spirit of gentleness and kindness to Africa, treating natives like human beings." To imply any such thing is to be guilty of a grave injustice to a host

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of noble men and women who have worked in Africa.

We repeat, Mr. Schweitzer is certainly to be commended for his charity. But he is not the first to be charitable to Africans, not by a long shot. Nor has he yet equalled some of his Christian predecessors who have proved their charity by dying for their African brothers and sisters in Christ.

### *Medical Mission Milestone*

The Catholic faith is essentially a missionary faith. "Go forth and teach all nations," was the command of Christ, and in fulfillment of His will, priests and sisters have endeavored to reach into every corner of the world with the Christian good tidings.

In her long missionary experience, the Church has learned that the care of ailing bodies is a necessary prelude to the touching of pagan souls. It is in fact in imitation of the compassion of Christ Himself for the sick that missionaries have always opened clinics and hospitals in mission territory whenever it was feasible to do so.

Beautifully expressive of such compassion is the congregation of religious known as the Medical Mission Sisters. Founded 30 years ago by Doctor Anna Dengel, this group of specialists in the field — now 500 of them, doctors, nurses and technicians — operate in 33 centers scattered across the con-

tinents. Among the foundations are 17 hospitals together with numerous maternity institutes and clinics. In 1955 the Sisters cared for more than 400,000 patients, and 275 student nurses, midwives and technicians were enrolled in schools connected with the hospitals.

The advantage of having women specialists in the field of medicine in mission territories should be obvious. In many parts of the world, to mention just one factor, infant mortality is tragically high. Yet in a country like India, men, even doctors, were not permitted to be present even at the most difficult childbirth. It seems logical that the Church should begin to look to her women missionaries to cope with this distressing situation.

Without doubt, incalculable good has come from the hospitals, clinics and dispensaries operated by the Medical Mission Sisters in India, Africa, Java and even benighted areas in our own land. "What did you do before we came?" a sick man in India was asked by a sister as he jostled for a place in line at the dispensary. "We died!" was the simple answer.

We wish God's blessing on the zealous founder, still living, of this noble work, and all her sisters. We commend this vocation to the consideration of girls drawn to nursing. Certainly to no more useful purpose could they dedicate their lives.

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### *United States Supreme Court on School Buses*

We cannot say that the First Amendment prohibits New Jersey from spending tax-raised funds to pay the bus fares of parochial school pupils as a part of a general program under which it pays the fares of pupils attending public and other schools. . . . The State contributes no money to the schools. It does not support them. Its legislation, as applied, does not more than provide a general program to help parents get their children, regardless of their religion, safely and expeditiously to and from accredited schools.—*Everson v. Board of Education, February, 1947.*



# Liguoriana



EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

*Selected and Edited by John P. Schaefer*

## THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

### CHAP. XII — CHARITY HOPES ALL THINGS

Hope increases charity, and charity increases hope.

Undoubtedly hope in the divine goodness adds to our love of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas says, that in the very moment when we hope to receive some benefit from some person, we begin also to love him. It is for this reason that the Lord forbids us to put our trust in creatures: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man." God does not wish us to trust in creatures because He does not wish us to fix our love upon them. St. Vincent de Paul therefore said: "Let us beware of placing too much confidence in men, for when God beholds us leaning on them for support, He Himself withdraws from us." On the other hand, the more we trust in God all the more shall we advance in His holy love. "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." The eagle is the bird that soars nearest the sun. In like manner, the soul trusting in God becomes detached from the earth and more and more united to God by love.

Now, as hope increases the love of God, so also does love help to increase hope. For charity makes us the adopted sons of God. In the natural order we are the work of His hands. But in the supernatural order we are made sons

of God and partakers of the divine nature through the merits of Jesus Christ. So that if charity makes us the sons of God, it also makes us heirs of heaven. Now a son claims the right of abiding under the paternal roof. An heir is entitled to the property. So it is that charity increases the hope of paradise and souls that love God can cry out incessantly, "Thy kingdom come!"

Moreover God loves those who love Him. He showers down His graces on those who seek Him by love. The soul that loves God most, therefore, has the greatest hope in His goodness. This confidence produces that unalterable tranquillity in the saints, making them always joyful and full of peace even amid the severest trials. For their love of Jesus Christ, and their conviction of His liberality towards those who love Him, leads them to trust solely in Him.

The principal object of Christian hope is God, Whom the soul enjoys in the kingdom of heaven. But we must not conclude that the hope of enjoying God in heaven is any obstacle to charity. For the hope of paradise is inseparably connected with charity. For in heaven charity receives its full and complete perfection. Charity is that infinite treasure which makes us friends of God.

### *The Liguorian*

St. Thomas Aquinas says that friendship is founded on the mutual communication of goods. For if friendship is nothing more than a mutual love between friends, it follows that there must be an interchange of goods which each possesses. For this reason the saint says: "If there be no communication, there is no friendship." In this he merely interpreted the words of Jesus Christ to His apostles: "I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My father I have made known to you." Since He had made them His friends He had communicated all His secrets to them.

Thus it is that St. Thomas teaches us that charity does not exclude the desire of the reward prepared for us in heaven by Almighty God. On the contrary, it makes us look to it as the chief object of our love. For this God is, constituting the bliss of paradise. And friendship implies that friends rejoice with one another.

St. Thomas defines Christian hope as, "the sure expectation of eternal happiness." Its certainty arises from the infallible promise of God to give eternal life to His faithful servants. By taking away sin, charity at the same time removes all obstacles to our obtaining the happiness of the blessed. The greater, therefore, our charity, the greater also and firmer is our hope.

The desire to go and see God in heaven stems not so much from the delight which we shall experience in loving God, as from the pleasure which we shall afford Him in loving Him. Nor is the joy of the blessed in heaven any hindrance to the purity of their love. Such joy is inseparable from their love. But they take far more satisfaction in their love of God than in the joy that it affords them.

It may be objected that the desire of a reward is rather a love of concupiscence than a love of friendship. We must, therefore, distinguish between temporal rewards promised by men and the eternal rewards of paradise promised by God to those who love Him. The rewards given by men are distinct from and independent of them, for they do not bestow themselves but only their goods. The principal reward, however, which God gives to the blessed is the gift of Himself. Hence to desire heaven is the same thing as to desire God Who is our last end.

The scope of our desires and aspirations, of all our thoughts and hopes, therefore, is to go and enjoy God in heaven that we may love Him with all our strength and rejoice in the enjoyment of God. The blessed certainly rejoice in their own happiness in that kingdom of delights. But the chief source of their happiness, that which contains all the rest, is to know that their beloved Lord possesses an infinite happiness. For they love God incomparably more than themselves. Each one of the blessed has such a love for Him, that he would willingly forfeit all happiness and undergo the most cruel torments rather than that God should lose (if possible) even the least particle of His happiness. For this reason the sight of God's infinite happiness, and the knowledge that it can never be lessened for all eternity, constitutes the soul's paradise. It is not the joy that enters into the blessed soul but the soul that enters into the joy of God. For the joy of God is the object of the joy of the blessed.

On the instant that a soul enters heaven, and sees by the light of glory the infinite beauty of God, she is at once seized and consumed with love.

### *The Liguorian*

As an intoxicated person no longer thinks of himself, so a soul in bliss can only think of loving and affording delight to her beloved Lord. She desires to possess Him entirely. And she does in fact possess Him without fear of losing Him any more.

In such a manner is the soul wholly united to God in heaven, and loves Him with all her strength. Her love is most perfect and complete. Though it is necessarily finite, for a creature is incapable of infinite love, it nevertheless renders her perfectly happy and contented, so that she desires nothing more. God, on the other hand, communicates Himself and unites Himself wholly to the soul, fills her with Himself in proportion to her merits. As fire penetrates iron and seems to change it into itself, so does God penetrate the soul and fill her with Himself.

This is the last end which the goodness of God has designed for us in the life to come. The soul, therefore, can never enjoy perfect peace on earth, for it is only in heaven that she can obtain perfect union with God. It is true that the lovers of Jesus Christ find peace in the practice of perfect conformity with the will of God. But they cannot in this life find complete peace. This is found only when our last end

is obtained, that is, when we see God face to face, and are consumed with His divine love.

It is for this reason that the saints, though they were all inflamed with the love of God, did nothing but sigh for heaven. St. Francis of Assisi, for instance, said: "I look for such a meed of bliss, that all my pain seems happiness." St. Thomas teaches us that the highest degree of charity that a soul can attain on earth is to desire intensely to go and be united with God and to enjoy Him in heaven.

The holy souls in purgatory feel no pain more acutely than that of their yearning to possess God from Whom they are still separated. This type of pain will especially afflict those who in their lifetime had but little desire of paradise. Cardinal Bellarmine says that there is a certain place in purgatory called "the prison of honor." Here certain souls are not tormented with any pain of sense, but merely with the pain of privation of the sight of God. This punishment is not for the commission of sin, but for coldness in desiring heaven. Eternal life is a most precious good, purchased by the death of Jesus Christ, and God punishes such souls as have been remiss during life in their desire to obtain it.

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### *Hope of Youth*

"O my dear children, young men and young women," said Cardinal Newman, "what need you have of the intercession of the Virgin Mother, of her help, of her pattern in respect to purity! What shall bring you forward in the narrow way if you live in the world, but the thought and patronage of Mary? What shall seal your senses, what shall tranquilize your heart when sights and sounds of danger are around you, but Mary. . . . She will comfort you in your discouragements, solace you in your fatigues, raise you after your falls, reward you for your successes."

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A woman can be 'too beautiful for words' but not for an argument.



## BOOK LOVERS DEPARTMENT

Conducted by T. Tobin

### CATHOLIC AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Gene Fowler, 1890-

Reporter and Biographer

#### I. Life:

Gene Fowler was born in Denver, Colorado, on March 8, 1890, the son of Charles and Dora Devlan. While Gene was very young his father and mother separated and he adopted the last name of his stepfather, Frank Fowler. Gene left grammar school at the age of ten to work for a taxidermist, but later returned to finish his education at the West Denver High School. After graduation he began his career first as a printer then as a newspaperman for the Denver papers. In 1916 he married Agnes Hubbard and three children have been born to their marriage. Gene went to New York in 1924 as the sports editor of the *Daily Mirror*, and the next year transferred to the *New York American* as managing editor. The fabulously large salaries that he used to lure reporters to the *Morning Telegraph* caused a very short stay as editor of that paper. Since 1928 he has worked as script writer for many of the large Hollywood studios and in 1952 he formed a company to produce movies for the theatre and TV.

The biggest event in the life of Gene Fowler was his conversion to the Church in 1950. He explains this change in several different places. "I have long wanted to be received into the true Church. My

decision was not a sudden, emotional event. Also, I did not wish to be a 'death-bed Catholic.' I am now sixty, and perhaps I can work in a small way to earn my right to be a son of the Church." As he explained his conversion to friends: "I have had such a good time here on earth that now I want to make sure that I have a good time in the next life."

#### II. Books:

Most of Gene Fowler's best works stem from his association with some of the great characters that he knew in his day as a reporter in New York. He lived during the roaring twenties that gave birth to so many well known people.

*The Great Mouthpiece* is the biography of the famous criminal lawyer, William J. Fallon. With Burgess Meredith he wrote the story of the *Mighty Barnum*. *A Solo in Tom-Toms*, written in 1946, is Gene Fowler's autobiography. *Good Night, Sweet Prince* recaptures the full life of John Barrymore, a personal friend and companion of Fowler. The ill-fated Jimmy Walker is the subject of *Beau James*. His latest biography is that of Jimmy Durante under the only possible title, *Schnozzola*. Adult readers will enjoy these personal stories of some of the famous people of their generation.



## FEBRUARY BOOK REVIEWS

### HILAIRE BELLOC

*Hilaire Belloc. A Memoir by J. B. Morton.* 185 pp. New York, N.Y.: Sheed and Ward. \$3.00.

One time a friend remarked that Belloc was worthy of a Boswell to record for posterity his words and deeds. Although J. B. Morton reminds us that Belloc would have ridiculed the idea of a Boswell for himself, yet the author of this memoir has performed in great measure the work of an intimate friend who preserves the flavor of the personality of a genius like Belloc. For over thirty years Morton, as one of Belloc's closest friends, ate, drank, sailed and walked with him, and above all listened to him.

The true figure of Belloc comes to life in the pages of this memoir. We see Belloc as the man who could completely dominate a gathering of friends who would sit in spellbound attention to his absorbing monologues on a variety of subjects. In passing it might be remarked that even the irrepressible Chesterton was silenced before the torrential outpouring of Belloc's speech. Belloc, the gregarious man around whom was built the legend of rollicking and tempestuous gaiety, was essentially a lonely and unhappy man because of personal and literary problems. The death of his wife and marriages of his children left him alone at home and the apparent failure of his great mission and tremendous battle for the restoration of the Catholic religion to its proper place in private and public life left Belloc a discouraged and depressed man. But essentially a religious man above all else, Belloc found comfort and solace in the thought of the reward of his true home in heaven that awaited him. The physically sick and mentally disturbed last years of the exuberant genius are well described by Morton who often visited him and who was with Belloc when he died.

One of the best epitaphs written on Belloc is that of F. J. Sheed. "More than any other man, Belloc made the English speaking Catholic world in which all of us live. There was Chesterton, of course, but then Belloc had so much to do with the making of Chesterton and Chesterton not much with the making of Belloc." J. B. Morton, the famous "Beachcomber" of the *London Daily Express* has presented a living, fighting portrait of Belloc and all lovers of Belloc are deeply in debt to him for the service.

### ST. THOMAS AND NEWMAN

*On the Truth of the Catholic Faith.* By St. Thomas Aquinas. Translated by Anton C. Pegis: 317 pp. Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books. \$.85. paper cover.

*Grammar of Assent.* By John Henry Newman. Introduction by Etienne Gilson. 396 pp. Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books. .95. paper cover.

Perhaps the second best known and important book of St. Thomas is the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, a book of apologetics for the missionaries engaged in the conversion of the Moslems. The renowned student of St. Thomas, Anton C. Pegis, has given us a new translation of this book under the title: *On the Truth of The Catholic Faith*. The first volume is the translation of the first book of the classic work which treats of the existence and nature of God. As would be expected the translation and the commentary by Dr. Pegis are very well done. The professional as well as the amateur philosopher will derive much from this book which repays serious study.

One of the classic works of Cardinal Newman is the *Grammar of Assent*, newly reissued with an introduction by the brilliant philosopher, Etienne Gilson. The most difficult of all of Newman's books to understand, this book is an explanation of the various steps that lead one to the

## The Liguorian

Church of Christ. An excellent book for the reader who can read slowly and reflectively.

### BIOGRAPHIES

*St. Francis of Assisi.* By Johannes Jorgensen. 354 pp. Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books. \$.95. paper cover.

*Father to the Immigrants.* By Icilio Felici. Translated by Carol Della Chiesa. 248 pp. New York, N.Y.: P. J. Kenedy and Sons. \$3.00.

*Odilia.* By Bernard C. Mischke, O.S.C. 163 pp. Onamia, Minn.: National Shrine of St. Odilia. \$2.00.

One of the best of all the many biographies of *St. Francis of Assisi* is that written by Johannes Jorgensen in 1906. The highly readable style of the great man of letters presents the heroic figure of the poor man of Assisi. An excellent life that is scholarly yet very readable.

*Father to the Immigrants* is the life story of Bishop John Scalabrini whose principal work was the spiritual assistance of the Italian immigrant to North and South America. Bishop Scalabrini will be best remembered as the founder of the Missionary Society of St. Charles and the one who urged Mother Cabrini to come to America. This is a well written biography of a zealous bishop who did much for souls in his native Italy as well as in the new world. The Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Cicognani, contributes a panegyric of the holy bishop in the preface to *Father to the Immigrants*.

*Odilia* is the fictionalized life of the fourth century English saint who died in Cologne as one of the companions of St. Ursula. Against the historical background of fourth century Britain with its Druids, pirate raids, Roman conquerors, the strength of the newly arrived Christian religion, the author tries to bring to life the personality of *Odilia* from the legends that survive. An interesting biography.

### MURDER MYSTERY

*Soeur Angele and the Embarrassed Ladies.* By Henri Catalan. 154 pp. New York, N.Y.: Sheed and Ward. \$2.50.

Fiction has given us the priest who doubles as a detective, convents which are the scenes of murders, and now a nun who is a detective. *Soeur Angele* is a French Sister of Charity who had studied legal medicine after obtaining her degree in medicine. But her habit does not prevent her from trying to solve a murder mystery to protect the lives of two innocent persons. *Soeur Angele and the Embarrassed Ladies* is the story of how the good nun not only cleared the names of the two people, relieved the minds of some not so innocent ladies, but also discovered the killer. This translation from the French reveals situations which are as complicated as life can be. This diverting piece of fiction will entertain the adult.

### JOE BREIG

*Life With My Mary.* By Joseph A. Breig. 202 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$3.00.

The popular Catholic essayist, Joe Breig, who has so often written about Breig does have his moments of philosophizing about marriage. For example here is the explanation of his move from the secular to a Catholic newspaper. "Divorce stories disgusted and angered me. One phrase especially aroused my hatred. Reporters always wrote automatically that somebody had 'won a divorce.' The truth was that somebody had lost a marriage, lost a romance, lost a vocation leading to God. And the nation had lost another stable family. Another stone had been washed away from the foundations of America."

Readers will enjoy this latest family book by Breig that begins with his discovering Mary, the new clerk in his father's store and concludes with the postscript that Mary Jo, his first grandchild, had arrived.

## BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

### I. Suitable for general reading:

Nine Man Eaters and One Rogue—*Anderson*  
 Defeat at Sea—*Bekker*  
 The Sunlit Ambush—*Derby*  
 The Far Journey—*Erdman*  
 The Fabulous Phonograph—*Gelatt*  
 Industry-College Relations—*Hodnett*  
 The Abominable Snowman—*Izzard*  
 Cookbook—*Keyes*  
 There Comes a Time—*Mercer*  
 Winston Churchill in Trial and Triumph—*Moorehead*  
 Christopher Columbus Mariner—*Morison*  
 The Guns of Chickamauga—*O'Connor*  
 Nine Men—*Rodell*  
 Tiger of the Snows—*Tenzing*  
 Murder in Fiji—*Vandercook*  
 The Story of Medicine—*Walker*  
 Adventure Unlimited—*Waters*  
 Five Fathers of Pepi—*Avery*  
 Marmaduke—*Anderson & Leeming*  
 Portrait of Barrie—*Asquith*  
 Papa's Wife—*Bjorn*  
 Not the Glory—*Boulle*  
 Eden; Making of a Statesman—*Campbell*  
 Top Assignment—*Coxe*  
 Peace at Bowling Green—*Crabb*  
 Notebooks of Major Thompson—*Daninos*  
 The Gentle Captain—*Davis*  
 A Cure for Serpents—*De Pirajno*  
 My Aunt Lucienne—*Feld*  
 The Rare Adventure—*Fergusson*  
 The Call from Calle Moreno—*Flores*  
 Commando Extraordinary—*Foley*  
 Music and Recordings—*Grunfeld*  
 Memoirs—*Hays*  
 Protestant, Catholic, Jew—*Herberg*  
 Bath Tangle—*Heyer*  
 Cartoon Treasury—*Johnson & Pyke*  
 Make Each Day Count—*Keller*

### II. Suitable only for adults:

#### A. Because of advanced style and contents:

The Desert and the Stars—*Armitage*  
 Bell's Landing—*Brace*  
 The Farther Shore—*Coates*  
 The Dark Place—*Davis*  
 Winds of Heaven—*Dickens*  
 The Bond and the Free—*Dunscomb*  
 The Plums Hang High—*Finney*  
 Overdraft on Glory—*Helvich*  
 2000 Fathoms Down—*Houot & Willm*  
 An Apple a Day—*Kaufman*  
 Jonathan Eagle—*Laing*  
 Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism—*Maritain*  
 Sailors Kiss Everybody—*McGehee*  
 Never Plead Guilty—*Noble & Averbuch*  
 The Loved and the Unloved—*Phillips*  
 The Exchange of Joy—*Quigly*  
 The Hawk and the Sun—*Reece*  
 Huffley Fair—*Smith*  
 The Big Pick-Up—*Trevor*  
 Makers of the Modern World—*Untermeyer*  
 Men From the Sea—*Wallenius*  
 Band of Angels—*Warren*  
 Marjorie Morningstar—*Wouk*  
 Restoration of Learning—*Bestor*  
 The Haunted Hacienda—*Cooper*  
 The Spirit in the Cage—*Churchill*  
 The Tontine—*Costain*  
 Leopard in My Lap—*Denis*  
 Decline of American Republic—*Flynn*  
 Best American Short Stories—*Foley*  
 The Sane Society—*Fromm*  
 A German Officer—*Groussard*  
 Mastery—*Jones*

#### B. Because of immoral incidents which do not, however, invalidate the book as a whole:

Mars in Capricorn—*Cross*  
 Live Till Tomorrow—*Haas*  
 The Genius and the Goddess—*Huxley*  
 Nine Rivers from Jordan—*Johnston*  
 Father Sets the Pace—*De Poncins*



## *Lucid Intervals*

"I've been watching that mechanic for the last fifteen minutes. There's a man who really knows his job. He didn't spill a drop of oil. He put the hood down gently, fastened it securely and left no fingerprints on it. He wiped his hands on a clean tissue before opening the door, spread a clean cloth over the upholstery, meshed gears noiselessly, and drove out into the street."

"Yeah, that's his own car."

Wife: "I was never so embarrassed in my life."

Husband: "What did I do now?"

Wife: "You asked Mrs. Smith how her husband was standing the heat, and he's been dead for two months."

A guide up in Maine was taking a couple of visiting anglers across an inlet in a boat that was rather frail and narrow. To make matters worse there was a considerable swell on the waters. Finally, one of the visitors asked the question that had been troubling him:

"Do you think this boat is likely to tip over?"

"Nope," replied the guide promptly.

Then after a moment's reflection:

"But you'd better keep your chewing gum in the middle of your mouth."

The porter was perplexed.

"Who on earth," he sputtered, "would want to steal a pullman ladder?"

Just then the curtain parted and the little old lady in Upper 7 poked her head through cautiously.

"Porter," she whispered, "you may use mine if you like. I won't be needing it again until morning."

The strangers seated beside each other at dinner struck up a conversation.

"Well, well, so you're an actor," said one. "I'm a banker and I'm kept pretty busy, but I'm ashamed to admit that I haven't been in a theatre in over ten years."

"Oh, don't let it worry you," consoled the actor. "I haven't been in a bank for a much longer period."

Harry: "I know a fellow who stayed up all night trying to figure out where the sun went when it set."

Larry: "What conclusion did he come to?"

Harry: "Well, it finally dawned on him."

An optimist and a pessimist went into business together. Trade flourished.

"Well," said the optimist, "we've had a wonderful month. It's been one constant run of customers."

"Yeah," agreed the pessimist dourly, "but look at those front doors. If people keep shoving through them at this rate, the hinges will be worn out in another week."

Musical host: "Would you like a sonata before dinner, my friend?"

Friend: "Well I had a couple before I left home but I guess I could stand another."

The couple arrived at the railway station loaded down with baggage.

"I wish," said the husband thoughtfully, "that we'd brought your grand piano."

"Now, let's not try to be funny," came the frigid reply.

"I'm not trying to be funny," he sadly explained, "I left the tickets on it."

## Amongst Ourselves

Why is it necessary that there should be a month of the year devoted, under the auspices of the Catholic Church authorities in the United States, to the wider dissemination of the Catholic Press, as February is thus devoted? Is it not true that people will read only what they want to read? Is there any valid ground on which an appeal can be made to people who have been reading only secular publications to start dipping into some that are concerned with moral and spiritual things?

Yes, there is such a valid ground. It is based on the fact, which everyone can recognize about himself, that there is a twofold tendency in human nature. St. Paul put it in these words: "I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man. . . . But I feel another law in my members fighting with the law of God, captivating me with the law of sin." Many people do not even get so far as to recognize a "delight with the law of God," because they give themselves over completely to the "law in their members." (i.e., their body, their lower nature) that contradicts the law of God and captivates them with the law of sin. This is especially true in respect to reading matter. A man can find himself so wrapped up in purely secular reading matter, or even obscene and vile reading matter, that he loses all sense of delight in the law of God, and, of course, is on the way to losing his soul forever. Such a man has to be led back

to an appreciation for his capacity to rejoice in the law of God by the efforts of those who know that unless he is led back to it, he will sink deeper and deeper into the service of his animal passions and in the end be thrust out of God's presence forever. Catholic Press Month is therefore in reality an appeal to the good side, the spiritual side, of human beings, urging them to turn from the kind of reading that captivates them more and more in the law of sin, to the kind that enhances and fructifies their delight in the law of God. Thousands testify to the fact that the greatest thing that ever happened to them was somebody's prevailing upon them to read the kind of literature that turned their minds to God.

There are thousands yet to be prevailed upon. Every February, through the public exhibits of Catholic publications, through the advertising on Catholic pamphlet racks, above all, through the personal efforts of individual Catholics to interest friends, relatives, fellow-workers, in good Catholic reading, more and more of the "captives of the flesh" are won over to the "delights of the spirit and of the law of God." If you who read this have found spiritual guidance and eternal hope through your own Catholic reading, don't fail to use whatever influence you have to bring the same blessings to others. Perhaps THE LIGUORIAN can be your instrument for doing so. It has been for many others.

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### LIGUORIAN BINDERS

We have had hard-cover binders made to order for holding 12 copies of THE LIGUORIAN in a single volume. Anyone can insert the issues in the binder. Those who preserve their copies of THE LIGUORIAN for reference will find the binders very handy, with the index always at the end of the December issue. Order binders from The Liguorian, Liguori, Mo., at \$2.50 each.

## Invitation

You are cordially invited to be an active participant in the work of Catholic Press Month, which is the work of bringing the teachings of Christ, through Catholic literature, to those who have forgotten them, and to those who are neglecting to put them into practice.

*The Liguorian* can be an effective instrument of such participation. If you have profited by it and enjoyed it, speak to some of your friends about it, urge them to subscribe, or present them with a gift subscription.

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